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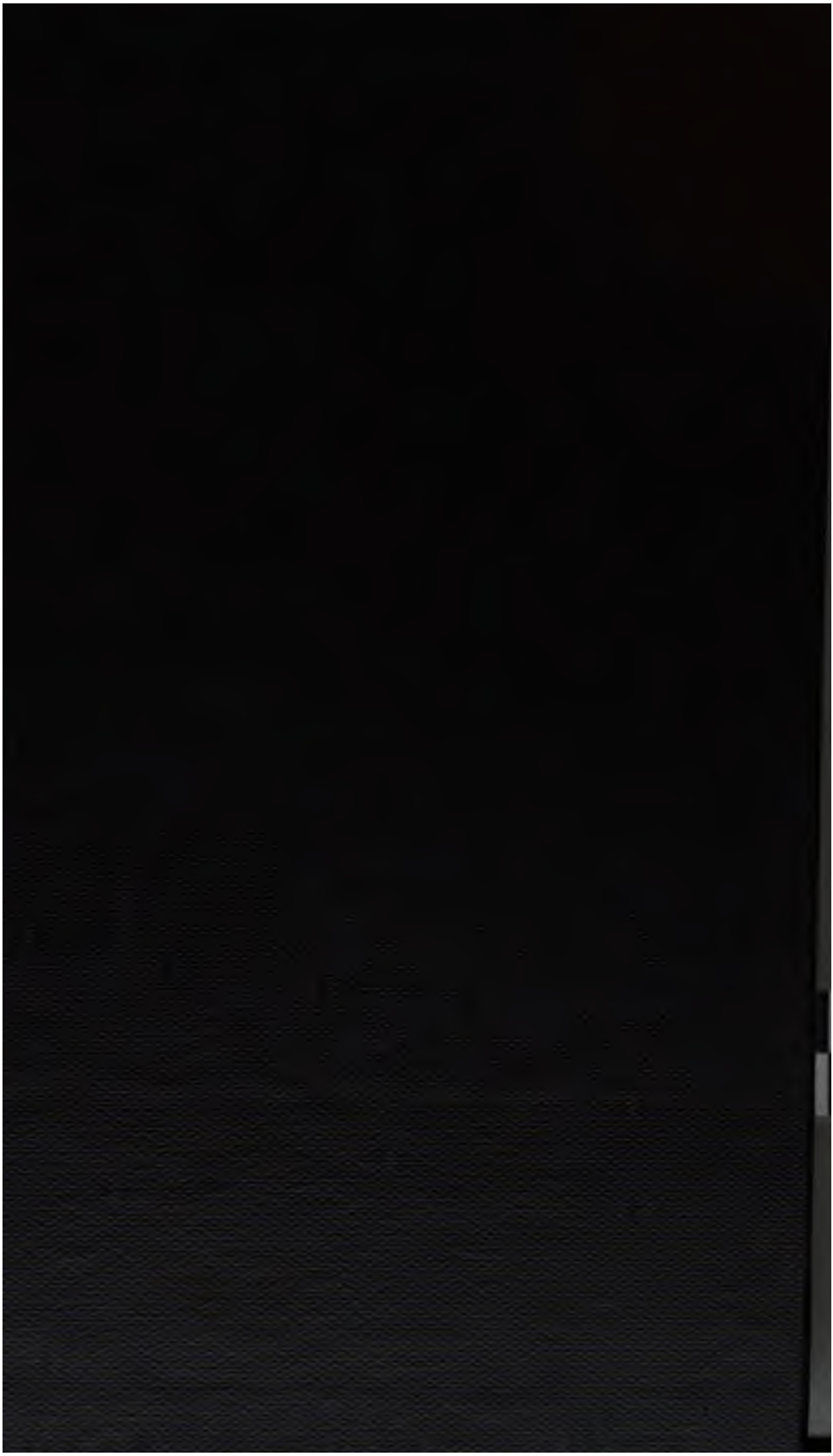

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THE WORKS

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LATE PRESIDENT OF UNION COLLEGE.

WITH A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER,

BY

TRYON EDWARDS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THREE SERMONS

ON THE

NECESSITY OF THE ATONEMENT,

AND ITS CONSISTENCY WITH

FREE GRACE IN FORGIVENESS.*

SERMON I.

EPHESIANS 1: 7.—*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

THE doctrine of the forgiveness of sins is a capital doctrine of the gospel. As it is much insisted on by the other writers of the New Testament; so it is above all, by the author of this epistle. In our text, he asserts that we are forgiven *according to the riches of grace*; not merely in the exercise of *grace*, as the very term *forgiveness* implies, but in the exercise of *the riches of grace*; importing that forgiveness is an act of the most *free and abundant* grace. Yet he also asserts that this gratuitous forgiveness is in consequence of a *redemption by the blood of Christ*. But how are these two parts of the proposition consistent? If we be in the literal sense forgiven in consequence of a redemption, we are forgiven on account of the price of redemption previously paid. How then can we be truly said to be *forgiven*; a word which implies the exercise of *grace*? and especially how can we be said to be forgiven according to the *riches of grace*? This is at least a seeming inconsistence. If our forgiveness be purchased, and the price of it be already paid, it seems to be a matter of debt, and not of grace. By this difficul-

* Preached before His Excellency the Governor, and a large number of both Houses of the Legislature of the State of Connecticut, during their sessions at New Haven, in October, 1785, and published by request.

ty some have been induced to reject the doctrine of Christ's redemption, satisfaction, or atonement. Others, who have not been driven to that extremity by this difficulty, yet have been exceedingly perplexed and embarrassed. Of these last, I freely confess myself to have been one. Having from my youth devoted myself to the study of theoretic and practical theology, I have regarded this as one of the GORDIAN KNOTS in that science. How far what shall now be offered towards a solution, ought to afford satisfaction, is submitted to the judgment of my candid auditors.

Our text naturally suggests these three inquiries:

Are sinners forgiven through the redemption or atonement of Jesus Christ only?—What is the reason or ground of this mode of forgiveness?—Is this mode of forgiveness consistent with *grace*, or *according to the riches of grace*? Let us consider these in their order.

I. *Are we forgiven through the redemption or atonement of Jesus Christ only?*

I say *redemption* or *atonement*, because, in my view, they mutually imply each other. That we *are* forgiven through the atonement of Christ—and *can be* forgiven in *no other* way, the scriptures very clearly teach. For evidence as to the first of these particulars, I appeal to the following passages of scripture, which are indeed but a few of the many which exhibit the same truth. First, our text itself: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Romans 3: 24, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." Acts 20: 28, "To feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Hebrews 9: 12, "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." 1 Peter 1: 18, "Forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Ibid. 2: 24, "Who his ownself bare our sins, in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." Isa. 53: 4, 5, 6, "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows—He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Ibid. v. 10, 11, 12, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief;—when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed —He shall bear their iniquities.—And he bare the sins of many."

The scriptures also teach the absolute *necessity* of the atonement of Christ, and that we can obtain forgiveness and salvation through that only. The sacrifices appointed to be made by the ancient Israelites, seem evidently to point to Christ; and to show the necessity of the vicarious sacrifice of him, who is therefore said to be "our *passover sacrificed* for us;" and to have "given himself for us, an *offering* and a *sacrifice* to God, for a sweet smelling savor;" and "now once in the end of the world, to have appeared, to put away sin, by the *sacrifice* of himself." 1 Cor. 5: 7. Eph. 5: 2. Heb. 9: 26. As the ancient Israelites could obtain pardon in no other way than by those sacrifices; this teaches us that we can obtain it only by the sacrifice of Christ.

The positive declarations of the New Testament teach the same truth still more directly—as Luke 24: 25, 26, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! *Ought* not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Verse 46, "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." Rom. 3: 25, 26, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness—*that he might be just*, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." It seems that God could not have been just in justifying the believer, had not Christ been made a propitiation. John 3: 14, 15, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so *must* the son of man be lifted up." Heb. 9: 22, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." 1 Cor. 3: 11, "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Acts 4: 12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The necessity of the death and atonement of Christ sufficiently appears by the bare event of his death. If his death were not necessary, he died in vain. But we cannot suppose that either he or his father would have consented to his death, had it not been absolutely necessary. Even a *man* of common wisdom and goodness, would not consent either to his own death or that of his son, but in a case of necessity, and in order to some important and valuable end. Much less can we suppose, that either Christ Jesus the Son would have consented to his own death, or that the infinitely wise and good father would have consented to the death of his only begotten and dearly beloved son, in whom his soul was well pleased, and who was full of grace and truth, the brightness of his own glory and the express image of his person, the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely, if there had not been the most urgent necessity. Especially as this most ex-

cellent son so earnestly prayed to the father, to exempt him from death; Matt. 20: 39, "O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." The son himself hath told us, John 11: 42, "That the father heareth him always;" and therefore we may be sure, that if the condition of his pathetic petition had taken place; if it had been possible, that the designs of God in the salvation of sinners should be accomplished, without the death of Christ, his prayer, in this instance, would have been answered, and he would have been exempted from death. And since he was not exempted, we have clear evidence, that his death was a matter of absolute necessity.

The necessity of the atonement of Christ, is clearly taught also by the apostle, Gal. 2: 21, "If righteousness come by law, then Christ is dead in vain." It is to no purpose to pretend that *the law*, in this passage, means the *ceremonial* law; because he tells us, chap. 3: 21, "That if there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." But the moral law was a law which had been given, and since no law which had been given could give life, it follows, that forgiveness and life could not be by the moral law, any more than by the *ceremonial*, and that if they could, Christ is dead in vain.

II. *Our next inquiry is, what is the reason or ground of this mode of forgiveness? or why is an atonement necessary in order to the pardon of the sinner?*

I answer, it is necessary on the same ground and for the same reasons, as punishment would have been necessary, if there had been no atonement made. The ground of both is the same. The question then comes to this: why would it have been necessary, if no atonement had been made, that punishment should be inflicted on the transgressors of the divine law? This, I suppose, would have been necessary, *to maintain the authority of the divine law.* If that be not maintained, but the law fall into contempt, the contempt will fall equally on the legislator himself; his authority will be despised, and his government weakened. And as the contempt shall increase, which may be expected to increase, in proportion to the neglect of executing the law; the divine government will approach nearer and nearer to a dissolution, till at length it will be totally *annihilated.*

But when moral creatures are brought into existence, there must be a moral government. It cannot be reconciled with the wisdom and goodness of God to make intelligent creatures and leave them at random, without moral law and government. That there must be a moral government, is the dictate of reason from the nature of things. Besides the nature of things, we have in

the present instance *fact*, to assist our reasoning. God hath *in fact* given a moral law and established a moral government over his intelligent creatures. So that we have clear proof, that infinite wisdom and goodness judged it to be necessary, to put intelligent creatures under moral law and government. But in order to a moral law, there must be a penalty; otherwise it would be mere advice, but no law. In order to support the authority and vigor of this law, the penalty must be inflicted on transgressors. If a penalty be denounced indeed, but never inflicted; the law becomes no law, as really as if no penalty had been annexed to it. As well might no law have been made or published, as a law have been published, with the most awful penalties, and these never be inflicted. Nay, in some respects it would be much better and more reconcilable with the divine perfections. It would be more consistent, and show that the legislator was not ignorant, either of his own want of power to carry a law into effect, or of the rights of his subjects, or of the boundaries between right and wrong. But to enact a law and not execute it, implies a weakness of some kind or other; either an error of judgment, or a consciousness of a depraved design in making the law, or a want of power to carry it into effect, or some other defect. Therefore such a proceeding as this is dishonorable and contemptible; and by it, both the law and legislator not only *appear in a contemptible light*, but *really are* contemptible.

Hence, to execute the threatening of the divine law, is necessary to preserve the dignity and authority of the law, and of the author of it, and to the very existence of the divine moral government. It is no impeachment of the divine power and wisdom, to say, that it is impossible for God himself to uphold his moral government, over intelligent creatures, when once his law hath fallen into contempt. He may indeed govern them by *irresistible force*, as he governs the material world; but he cannot govern them *by law*, by rewards and punishments.

If God maintain the authority of his law, by the infliction of the penalty, it will appear, that he acts consistently in the legislative and executive parts of his government. But if he were not to inflict the penalty, he would act and appear to act, an inconsistent part, or to be inconsistent with himself. If the authority of the divine law be supported by the punishment of transgressors, it will most powerfully tend to restrain all intelligent creatures from sin. But if the authority of the law be not supported, it will rather encourage and invite to sin, than restrain from it.

For these reasons, which are indeed all implied in supporting

the dignity and authority of the divine law, it would have been necessary, had no atonement for sin been made, that the penalty of the law be inflicted on transgressors.

If in this view of the matter, it should be said, Though for the reasons before mentioned, it is necessary that the penalty of the law, in *many* instances, or in *most* instances, be inflicted; yet why is it necessary, that it should be inflicted in *every* instance? Why could not the Deity, in a sovereign way, have forgiven *at least some sinners* without any atonement? Why could not the authority of the law have been sufficiently supported, without the punishment of every individual transgressor? We find that such strictness is not *necessary* or even *subservient* to the public good, in human governments; and why is it necessary in the divine? To these inquiries I answer, by other inquiries. Why, on the supposition of no atonement, would it have been necessary, that the penalty of the law should be inflicted in *any* instance? Why could not the Deity, in a sovereign way, without any atonement, have pardoned all mankind? I presume it will be granted, for the reasons before assigned, that such a proceeding as this, would have been inconsistent with the dignity and authority of the divine law and government. And the same consequence *in a degree*, follows from *every instance* of pardon in this mode. It is true the ends of human governments are tolerably answered, though in some instances the guilty are suffered to pass with impunity. But as imperfection attends all human affairs; so it attends human governments in this very particular, that there are *reasons of state* which require, or the public good requires, that gross criminals, be in some instances, dismissed with impunity, and without atonement. Thus, because the government of David was weak, *and the sons of Zeruiah were too hard for him*, Joab, a most atrocious murderer, could not, during the life of David, be brought to justice. In other instances, atrocious criminals are pardoned, in order to obtain information against others still more atrocious, and dangerous to the community. In many instances, the *principals* only in certain high crimes, are punished; the rest being led away by artifice and misrepresentation, are not supposed to deserve punishment. And it is presumed, that in every instance, wherein it is really for the good of the community, to pardon a criminal, without proper satisfaction for his crime, it is because of either some weakness in the particular state of the government, under which the pardon is granted; or some imperfection in the laws of that state, so that they are not adapted to the particular case; or some other imperfection such as is apt to attend all human affairs. But as not

any of these is supposable in the divine government, there is no arguing conclusively, from pardons in human governments, to pardons in the divine.

It may be added, that in every instance in human governments, in which just laws are not strictly executed, the government is so far weakened; and the character of the rulers either legislative or executive, suffers, either in point of ability or in point of integrity. If it be granted that the law is just, and condemns sin to no greater punishment than it deserves, and if God were to pardon it without atonement, it would seem that he did not hate sin in every instance, nor treat it as being what it really is, infinitely vile.

For these reasons it appears that it would have been necessary, provided no atonement had been made, that the penalty of the law should have been inflicted, even in every instance of disobedience; and for the same reasons doubtless it was necessary, that if any sinners were to be pardoned, they should be pardoned only in consequence of an *adequate* atonement. The atonement is the substitute for the punishment threatened in the law; and was designed to answer the same ends of supporting the authority of the law, the dignity of the divine moral government, and the consistency of the divine conduct in legislation and execution. By the atonement it appears that God is determined that his law shall be supported; that it shall not be despised or transgressed with impunity; and that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God.

The very idea of an atonement or satisfaction for sin, is something which, to the purposes of supporting the authority of the divine law, and the dignity and consistency of the divine government, is equivalent to the punishment of the sinner, according to the literal threatening of the law. That which answers these purposes being done, whatever it be, atonement is made, and the way is prepared for the dispensation of pardon. In any such case, *God can be just and yet the justifier of the sinner.* And that that which is sufficient to answer these purposes, has been done for us according to the gospel plan, I presume none can deny, who believe, that the eternal "word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," and that he the only begotten and well beloved son of God, "bare our sins in his own body on the tree," and "gave himself a sacrifice to God for us."

But perhaps some who may readily grant that what Christ hath done and suffered, is undoubtedly sufficient to atone for the sins of his people; may also suppose that if God had seen fit so to order it, we might have made a sufficient atonement for our own

sins. Or whether they believe in the reality and sufficiency of the atonement of Christ or not, they may suppose that we might have atoned, or even now may atone, for our own sins. This hypothesis therefore demands our attention.

If we could have atoned, by any means, for our own sins, it must have been either by our *repentance* and *reformation*, or by *enduring* a *punishment*, less in degree or duration, than that which is threatened in the law as the wages of sin. No other way for us to atone for our own sins appears to be conceivable. But if we attend to the subject, we shall find that we can make no proper atonement in either of these ways.

1. We could not make atonement for our sins by *repentance* and *reformation*. Repentance and reformation are a mere return to our duty, which we ought never to have forsaken or intermitted. Suppose a soldier deserts the service into which he is enlisted, and at the most critical period not only forsakes his general and the cause of his country, but joins the enemy and exerts himself to his utmost in his cause, and in direct opposition to that of his country; yet after twelve months spent in this manner, he repents and returns to his duty and his former service; will this repentance and reformation atone for his desertion and rebellion? Will his repentance and return, without punishment, support the authority of the law against desertion and rebellion, and deter others from the like conduct equally as the punishment of the delinquent according to law? It cannot be pretended. Such a treatment of the soldier would express no indignation or displeasure of the general at the conduct of that soldier; it would by no means convince the army or the world, that it was a most heinous crime to desert and join the standard of the enemy. Just so in the case under consideration. The language of forgiving sinners barely on their repentance is, that he who sins shall repent; that the curse of the law is repentance; that he who repents shall suffer, and that because he deserves no further punishment. But this would be so far from an effectual tendency to discourage and restrain from sin, that it would greatly encourage to the commission and indulgence of it; as all that sinners would have to fear, on this supposition, would be not the wrath of God, nor anything terrible, but repentance, the greatest blessing to which any man in this life can attain. If this were the condition of forgiving sinners, not only no measures would be taken to support the divine law, but none to vindicate the character of God himself, or to show that he acts a consistent part, and agreeably to his own law; or that he is a friend to virtue and an enemy to vice. On the other hand, he would rather appear as a friend to sin and

vice, or indifferent concerning them. What would you think of a prince who in a law against murder, should threaten it with a punishment properly severe; yet should declare that none guilty of that crime and repenting should be punished? or if he did not positively declare this, yet should in fact suffer all murderers who repented of their murders, to pass with impunity? Undoubtedly you would conclude that he was either a very *weak* or a very *wicked* prince; either that he was unable to protect his subjects, or that he had no real regard to their lives or safety, whether in their individual or collective capacity.

2. Neither could we make atonement by any sufferings short of the *full punishment of sin*. Because the very idea of atonement is something done, which to the purpose of supporting the authority of the law, the dignity and consistency of divine government and conduct, is fully equivalent to the curse of the law, and on the ground of which, the sinner may be saved from that curse. But no sufferings endured *by the sinner himself*, short of the curse of the law, can be to these purposes equivalent to that curse; any more than a less number or quantity can be equal to a greater. Indeed a less degree or duration of suffering endured by *Christ the Son of God*, may, on account of the infinite dignity and glory of his person, be an equivalent to the curse of the law endured by *the sinner;* as it would be a far more striking demonstration of a king's displeasure, to inflict, in an ignominious manner, on the body of his own son, forty stripes save one; than to punish some obscure subject with death. But when the person is the same, it is absurd to suppose that a less degree or duration of pain can be equal to a greater, or can equally strike terror into the minds of spectators, and make them fear and no more do any such wickedness.

Besides; if a less degree or duration of punishment, inflicted on the sinner, would answer all the purposes of supporting the authority of the divine law, etc. equally as that punishment which is threatened in the law; it follows that the punishment which is threatened in the law is too great, is unjust, is cruel and oppressive; which cannot be as long as God is a just being.

Thus it clearly appears, that we could never have atoned for our own sins. If therefore atonement be made at all, it must be made by some other person; and since as we before argued, Christ the son of God hath been appointed to this work, we may be sure, that it could be done by no other person of inferior dignity.

It may be inquired of those who deny the necessity of the atonement of Christ, whether the *mission, work and death* of

Christ were at all *necessary* in order to the salvation of sinners. If they grant that they were necessary, as they exhibit the strongest motives to repentance; I ask further, could not God by any revelation or motives otherwise, whether externally or internally, exhibited, lead sinners to repentance? We find he did in fact, without the mission, work and death of Christ, lead the saints of the Old Testament to repentance. And doubtless in the same way, he might have produced the same effect, on men of modern times. Why then doth the Scripture say, "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;" and, "neither is there salvation in any other?" If it be said that these texts are true, as God hath *seen fit* to adopt and establish this mode of salvation; it occurs at once, that then it may with equal truth be said, concerning those who were converted by the preaching of Paul; other foundation could no man lay, for their salvation, than the apostle *Paul.* In this sense too every event which ever takes place, is equally necessary as the mission and death of Christ; and it was in no other sense necessary, that Christ should be sent and die, than that *a sparrow should fall, or not fall, to the ground.* In short to say, that the mission and death of Christ were necessary, because God had made this constitution, is to resolve all into the sovereignty of God, and to confess that no *reason* of Christ's mission and death is assignable.

Besides, if the mission, death and resurrection of Christ, and the knowledge of them, be, by divine constitution, made necessary to the salvation of sinners; this will seem to be wholly inconsistent with the fundamental principle of the system of those who deny the atonement of Christ; I mean the principle, that it is not reconcilable with the perfections of God, to refuse a pardon to any who repent. If bare repentance and reformation, be the ground of pardon, doubtless all who repent, though ever so ignorant of Christ, his death and resurrection, and of the motives to repentance therein exhibited, are entitled to pardon; and if so, in what sense will the Socinians say, the mission and death of Christ are necessary to pardon? Not surely as purchasing salvation for even those who are ignorant of them;—this is abhorrent to their whole system. Not as exhibiting the strongest motives to repentance; because in the case now supposed, these motives are perfectly unknown. And they will not say, it is impossible for any to repent who are ignorant of Christ.*

* "It is certainly the doctrine of reason, as well as of the Old Testament, that God is merciful to the *penitent*, and nothing is requisite to make men, *in all situations*, the objects of his favor, but such *moral conduct* as he has made them *capable of*."—*Priestly's Corruptions of Christianity*, Vol. I. p. 279.

Again, how is it more consistent with the divine perfections, to confine pardon and salvation to the narrow limits of those who know and are influenced by the motives to repentance, implied in the death and resurrection of Christ; than to the limits of those who repent and depend on the atonement of Christ?

It may be further inquired of those gentlemen mentioned above, whether the pardon of the penitent, be according to the divine *law*, or according to the *gospel*. If it be a constitution of the *law*, that every penitent be pardoned, what then is the *gospel*? And wherein does *the grace* of the latter, exceed that of the former? Besides, is it not strange, to suppose that *bare law* knows anything of *repentance* and of the *promise* of *pardon* on repentance? Surely such a law must be a very *gracious* law; and a *very gracious law* and a *very gracious gospel* seem to be very *nearly* one and the same thing. It has been commonly understood that the divine *law* is the rule of *justice*. If so, and it be a provision of the law, that every penitent be acquitted from punishment; then surely there is *no grace* at all in the acquittal of the penitent, as the gentlemen to whom I now refer pretend, there is none on the supposition of the satisfaction of Christ. Again; if the law secure impunity to all penitents, then all the terror or punishment which the law threatens, is either repentance itself, or that wise and wholesome discipline which is necessary to lead to repentance; these are the true and utmost *curse* of the law. But neither of these is any curse at all; they are at least *among* the greatest blessings which can be bestowed on those who need them. But if it be granted that the bare law of God does not secure pardon to the penitent, but admits of his punishment, it will follow that the punishment of the penitent would be nothing opposed to justice. Surely God hath not made an unjust law. It also follows, that to punish the penitent would be not at all inconsistent with the divine perfections; unless God hath made a law, which cannot with respect to the penitent, or a certain part of his subjects, be executed consistently with his own perfections. And if the *punishment* of the penitent, provided no atonement had been made, would not be inconsistent with justice, or with the perfections of God, who will say, that the pardon of the penitent, on the sole footing of an atonement, is inconsistent with either?

If neither strict justice, nor the divine law founded on justice, nor the divine perfections, without an atonement, secure pardon to all who repent, what will become of the boasted argument of the Socinians, against the atonement, that God will certainly pardon and save, and that it is absurd and impious to suppose, that

he will not pardon and save, all who repent? Are the Socinians themselves certain, that God will not do that which eternal justice, his own law, and his own perfections allow him to do? The dilemma is this: *eternal justice* either requires that every penitent be pardoned in consequence of his repentance merely, or it does not. If it do require this,* it follows, that pardon is an act of *justice* and not of *grace;* therefore let the Socinians be forever silent on this head. It also follows, that repentance answers, satisfies, fulfils, the divine law, so that, in consequence of it, the law has no further demand on the sinner. It is therefore either the complete righteousness of the law, or the complete curse of it; for cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. It also follows, that sin is no moral evil. Doubtless that which deserves no punishment, or token of the divine displeasure, is no moral evil. But the utmost that justice, on this hypothesis, requires of the sinner, is repentance, which is no token of the divine displeasure, but an inestimable blessing. It also follows, that as eternal justice is no other than the eternal law of God, *grace* and *truth*, *life* and *immortality* came and were brought to light by Moses, since the *law* came by him; that the law contains exceeding great and precious *promises*, which promises, however, *exceeding great* and *precious* as they are, are no more than assurances, that we shall not be *injured*. It follows in the last place that *justice* and *grace*, *law* and *gospel*, are perfectly synonymous terms.

Or if the other part of the dilemma be taken, that *eternal justice* does not require, that every penitent be pardoned; who knows but that God may see fit, to suffer justice, in some instances, to take place? Who will say that the other divine perfections are utterly inconsistent with justice? or that wisdom, goodness and justice cannot coexist in the same character? or that the law† of God is such that it cannot consistently with the divine character, be executed in any case with respect to the penitent, or with others any further than is needful to produce re-

* If the penitent may not be punished, then the impenitent may not be, any further than to lead them to repentance, which is no punishment but a blessing. But it is granted, on the present supposition that the law does admit of punishment which is not disciplinary and conducive to the good of the subject.

† That law in which Paul delighted after the inward man; which he declares to be holy, and just, and good; to be glorious too, nay, in the abstract, *glory*, (Rom. vii. and 2 Cor. iii.) and which David pronounces to be *perfect*, and more desirable than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey comb, Ps. xix.

pentance, which is indeed no execution of it at all.* These would be bold assertions indeed; let him who avows them, at the same time prove them. Indeed, he must either prove these assertions, or own that *justice* requires the pardon of every penitent, and abide the consequences; or renounce the doctrine that the divine perfections require that every penitent be pardoned, without an atonement.†

SERMON II.

EPHESIANS 1: 7.—*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

Having in the preceding discourse, given an answer to the two inquiries proposed concerning the *necessity* and the *ground* of the necessity of the atonement of Christ, I proceed to the third, which is,

III. *Are we, notwithstanding the redemption of Christ, forgiven freely by grace?*

That we should be forgiven wholly through the redemption of Christ, and yet by *free grace*, hath, as I observed, appeared to many, an inconsistency, or a perplexing difficulty. In discoursing on this question, I shall, 1. Mention several attempts which have been made to solve this difficulty. 2. I shall suggest some considerations which may possibly lead to the true solution.

1. I am to mention several modes, in which attempts have been made, to solve this difficulty.

(1) Some allow that there is no exercise of grace in the *bare pardon*‡ or *justification* of the sinner; that all the grace of the gospel consists in the gift of Christ; in providing an atonement;

* The law knows nothing of penitence. Mere disciplinary punishment is no execution of law. The present supposition is, that the law does admit of vindictive punishment.

† "Arguments drawn from such considerations as those of the moral government of God, the nature of things, and the general plan of revelation, will not be put off to a future time. The whole compass and force of them is within our reach, and if the mind be unbiassed, they must, I think, determine our assent."—*Corruptions of Christianity*, Vol. I. p. 278.

‡ The impropriety of expression, in speaking of *pardon* without *grace*, would need an apology, were it not common in treatises on this subject. No more is intended, than that the sinner is *acquitted* or *released*, without *grace*.

in the undertaking of Christ to make atonement, and in the actual making of it. And as the pardon of the sinner is founded on those gracious actions; so *that*, in a more lax sense, is also said to be an act of *grace*. As to this account of the matter, I have to observe, that it is rather yielding to the objection, than answering it. It is allowed, in this state of the matter, that the *pardon* of the sinner is properly no act of grace. But this seems not to be reconcilable with the plain declarations of scripture; as in our text: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to *the riches of his grace*. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, Rom. 3: 24. These and such like passages seem plainly to import, that pardon itself is an act of grace, and not merely that it is founded on other acts, which *are* acts of grace. Besides the very idea of pardon or forgiveness implies *grace*. So far only is any crime pardoned, as it is pardoned *graciously*. To pardon a crime on the footing of justice, in the proper sense of the word *justice*, is a direct contradiction.

Again; it is not proper to say, that the pardon of the sinner is an act of grace, merely because it is founded on the gracious gift of Christ, and his gracious act in making atonement. It is not proper to say, that any act is an act of grace, merely because it is founded on another act, which is really an act of grace. As well we may say, that if a creditor, by a third person, furnish his debtor with money sufficient to discharge his debt, when the debtor has in this way, by a third person, paid the full debt, it is an act of grace in the creditor to give up the obligation. Whereas, who does not see that the furnishing of the money, and the giving up of the obligation, are two distinct acts; and however the former is indeed an act of grace; yet the latter is no more an act of grace, than if the money had been paid to some other creditor, and he had given up an obligation for the same sum. If it be an act of grace in the creditor, to deliver up an obligation, for which he hath received the full sum, because the money paid was originally furnished by himself, then it would be consistent with justice in the creditor, to retain the obligation, after he has received the full sum for which it was given; or to reject the money, and cast the creditor into prison, though he tenders payment. But neither of these, I presume, will be pretended to be just.

(2) Some have attempted to relieve the difficulty now under consideration, in this manner: They say, The pardon of the sinner is no act of grace to *Christ*, because *he* has paid the debt for the sinner; but that it is an act of grace to the *sinner*, because

the debt was paid, not by the sinner himself, but by Christ. Nor was Christ so much as *delegated* by the sinner to pay his debt. Concerning this I observe, in the *first place*, That if the atonement of Christ be considered as the payment of a debt, the release of the sinner seems not to be an act of grace, although the payment be made by Christ, and not by the sinner personally. Suppose any one of you, my auditors, owes a certain sum; and he goes and pays the full sum himself personally. Doubtless all will agree, that the creditor, in this case, when he gives up the obligation, performs a mere act of justice, in which there is no grace at all. But in what respect would there have been more grace in giving up the obligation, if the money had been sent by a servant, by a friend, or by any third person? Here I am sensible an objection will arise to this effect: But we did not send the payment of our debt to God, by the hand of Christ as our friend; we did not *delegate* him to make atonement for us; he was graciously appointed and given by God. To this I answer, That this objection places the whole grace of the gospel in *providing* the Savior, not in the *pardon* of sin. Besides, if by *delegating* Christ, be meant such a sincere consent and earnest desire, that Christ should make atonement for us, as a man may have, that his friend should discharge a debt in his behalf; without doubt every true christian, in this sense, delegates Christ to make atonement for his sins. Did not Abraham and all the saints who lived before the incarnation of Christ, and who were informed that atonement was to be made for them by Christ, sincerely consent to it, and earnestly desire it? And though now Christ has actually made atonement, yet every one who walks in the steps of the faith of Abraham, is the subject of the like sincere consent to the office and work of Christ, and the like earnest desire, that by his atonement, a reconciliation may be effected between God and himself. So that if Christ have, in the proper sense of the words, *paid the debt* for his people, his people do as truly send him to make this payment, as a man ever sends his friend to make payment to his creditor, provided still, that the friend furnishes the money to be paid.

Nor is anything wanting to make any man, or all men, in this sense, delegate Christ to make atonement for them, but the gift of repentance or a new heart. And if God had not prevented them by previously appointing Christ to the work of redemption, all mankind being brought to repentance, and being informed that Christ, on their consent and delegation, would make atonement for their sins, would freely have given their consent, and delegated him to the work.

But what if the people of Christ did not, in any sense, delegate him to this work; would this cause the payment of their debt by Christ, to be at all more consistent with free grace in their discharge? Suppose a man without any delegation, consent, or knowledge of his friend, pays the full demand of his creditor, it is manifest, that the creditor is obliged in justice to discharge the debtor, equally as if the agent had acted by delegation from the debtor. Or if we had in every sense delegated and commissioned Christ, still our pardon would be an act of grace, as still we should be treated more favorably than our personal characters deserve.

Now to apply the whole of this to the subject before us: If Christ have, in the proper sense of the words, paid the debt which we owed to God, whether by a delegation from us or not; there can be no more grace in our discharge, than if we had paid it ourselves.

But the fact is, that Christ has not, in the *literal* and *proper* sense, paid the debt for us. It is indeed true, that our deliverance is called a *redemption*, which refers to the deliverance of a prisoner out of captivity, commonly effected by paying a certain sum as the price of his liberty. In the same strain, Christ is said to give himself a *ransom* for many, and christians are said to be *bought* with a *price*, etc. all which scripture expressions bring into view the payment of money, or the discharge of a debt. But it is to be remembered, that these are metaphorical expressions, and therefore not literally and exactly true. We had not deprived God of his property; we had not robbed the treasury of heaven. God was possessed of as much property after the fall as before; the universe and the fulness thereof still remained his. Therefore when Christ made satisfaction for us, he *refunded* no property. As none had been *taken away*, none *needed* to be refunded. But we had *rebelled* against God, we had practically despised his law and authority, and it was necessary, that his authority should be supported, and that it should be made to appear, that sin shall not go without proper tokens of divine displeasure and abhorrence; that God will maintain his law; that his authority and government shall not be suffered to fall into contempt; and that God is a friend to virtue and holiness, and an irreconcilable enemy to transgression, sin and vice. These things were necessary to be made manifest, and the clear manifestation of these things, if we will use the term, was *the debt* which was due to God. This manifestation was made in the sufferings and death of Christ. But Christ did not, *in the literal sense*, pay the debt we owed to God; if he had paid it, all grace would have been excluded from the pardon of the sinner. Therefore,

(3) Others, seeing clearly that these solutions of the difficulty are not satisfactory, have said, that the atonement of Christ consisted, not in the payment of a debt, but in the *vindication of the divine law and character*; that Christ made this vindication, by practically declaring the justice of the law, in his active obedience, and by submitting to the penalty of it, in his death; that as what Christ did and suffered in the flesh, was a declaration of the rectitude of the divine law and character, so it was a declaration of the evil of sin; and the greater the evil of sin appears to be, the greater the grace of pardon appears to be. Therefore the atonement of Christ is so far from diminishing the grace of pardon, that it magnifies it. The sum of this is, that since the atonement consists, not in the payment of a debt, but in the vindication of the divine law and character; therefore it is not at all opposed to free grace in pardon.

Concerning this stating of the matter, I beg leave to observe; that if by *a vindication of the divine law and character*, be meant, proof given that the law of God is just, and that the divine character is good and irreproachable; I can by no means suppose, that the atonement consisted in a vindication of the law and character of God. The law is no more proved to be just, and the character of God is no more proved to be good, by the perfect obedience and death of Christ, than the same things are proved by the perfect obedience of the angels, and by the torments of the damned. But I shall have occasion to enlarge on this point by and by.

Again; if by *vindication of the divine law and character*, be meant, proof given that God is determined to support the authority of his law, and that he will not suffer it to fall into contempt; that he will also support his own dignity, will act a consistent part in legislation and in the execution of his law, and will not be disobeyed with impunity, or without proper satisfaction; I grant, that by Christ the *divine law and character are vindicated*; so that God can now consistently with his own honor, and the authority of his law, forgive the sinner. But how does this make it appear that there is any grace in the pardon of the sinner, when Christ as his substitute, hath made full atonement for him, by vindicating the law and character of God? What if *the sinner himself*, instead of *Christ*, had by obedience and suffering, vindicated the law and character of God; and in consequence had been released from further punishment? Would his release in this case, have been by *grace*, or by *justice*? Doubtless by the latter and not by the former; for "to him that worketh, is the reward reckoned, not of grace, but of debt," Rom. 4: 4.

Therefore why is it not equally an act of justice, to release the sinner, in consequence of the same vindication made by *Christ?* Payment of debt equally precludes grace, when made by a *third person*, as when made by the debtor himself. And since the vindication of the divine law and character, made by the sinner himself, precludes grace from the release of the sinner; why does not the same vindication as effectually preclude it when made by a *third person?*

Those authors who give us this solution of the difficulty under consideration, seem to suppose that it is a sufficient solution to say that the atonement consists, not in the payment of debt, but in the vindication of the divine law and character; and what they say, seems to imply, that however or by whomsoever, that vindication be made, whether by the sinner himself, or any other person, it is not at all opposed to the exercise of grace in the release of the sinner. Whereas it appears by the text just now quoted and by many others, that if that vindication were made by the sinner himself, it would shut out all grace from his release. And I presume this will be granted by those authors themselves, on a little reflection. To say otherwise, is to say, that though a sinner should endure the curse of the law, yet there would be grace in his subsequent release. It seems then that the grace of pardon depends, not barely on this, that the atonement consists in a vindication of the law and character of God; but upon this particular circumstance attending the vindication, that it be made by a *third person.* And if this circumstance will leave room for grace in the release of the sinner, why is there not as much grace in the release of the sinner, though the atonement of Christ be a payment of the sinner's debt; since the payment is attended with the same *important* and *decisive* circumstance, that it is made by a *third person?*

Objection. But we could not vindicate the law and character of God; therefore it is absurd to make the supposition, and to draw consequences from the supposition, that we had made such a vindication. *Answer.* It is no more absurd to make this supposition, than it is to make the supposition, that we had paid the debt to divine justice; for we could no more do this than we could make the vindication in question. And if it follows from this circumstance, that we neither have vindicated nor could vindicate the divine character, that our release from condemnation is an act of grace; why does it not also follow from the circumstance, that we neither have paid nor could pay the debt to divine justice, that our release is an act of grace, even on the supposition, that Christ has in the literal sense paid the debt for us?

Thus, not any of these modes of solving this grand difficulty, appears to be satisfactory. Even this last, which seemed to bid the fairest to afford satisfaction, fails. Therefore,

2. I shall suggest some considerations, which may possibly lead to the true solution. The question before us, is, whether pardon through the atonement of Christ be an act of *justice* or of *grace*. In order to a proper answer to this question, it is of primary importance, that we have clear and determinate ideas affixed to the words *justice* and *grace*.

I find the word *justice* to be used in three distinct senses; sometimes it means *commutative* justice, sometimes *distributive* justice, and sometimes what may be called *general* or *public* justice.

Commutative justice respects property and matters of commerce solely, and secures to every man his own property. To treat a man justly in this sense, is not to deprive him of his property, and whenever it falls into our hands, to restore it duly, or to make due payment of debts. In one word, commutative justice is to violate no man's property.

Distributive justice consists in properly rewarding virtue or good conduct, and punishing crimes or vicious conduct; and it has respect to a man's personal moral character or conduct. To treat a man justly in this sense, is to treat him according to his personal character or conduct. Commutative justice in the recovery of debts, has no respect at all to the character or conduct of the debtor, but merely to the property of the creditor. Distributive justice in the punishment of crimes, has no respect at all to the property of the criminal; but merely to his personal conduct; unless his property may, in some instances, enhance his crimes.

General or *public* justice comprehends all moral goodness; and though the word is often used in this sense, it is really an improper use of it. In this sense, whatever is *right*, is said to be *just*, or an act of *justice*; and whatever is *wrong* or improper to be done, is said to be *unjust*, or an act of *injustice*. To practise justice in this sense, is to practise agreeably to the dictates of general benevolence, or to seek the glory of God and the good of the universe. And whenever the glory of God is neglected, it may be said, that God is *injured* or *deprived of his right*. Whenever the general good is neglected or impeded, the universe may be said to suffer an *injury*. For instance; if Paul were now to be cast down from heaven, to suffer the pains of hell, it would be wrong, as it would be inconsistent with God's covenant faithfulness, with the designed exhibition of his glorious grace, and with the good of the universe. In this sense, it would

not be *just.* Yet in the sense of *distributive* justice, such a treatment of Paul would be perfectly just, as it would be no more than correspondent to his personal demerits.

The term *grace*, comes now to be explained. *Grace* is ever so opposed to justice, that they mutually limit each other. Wherever *grace* begins, *justice* ends; and wherever *justice* begins, *grace* ends. Grace as opposed to commutative justice is gratuitously to relinquish property or to forgive a man his debt. And commutative *injustice* is to demand more of a man, than the property of the claimant. Grace as opposed to justice in the distributive sense, is to treat a man more favorably or mildly, than is correspondent to his personal character or conduct. To treat him *unjustly* is to use him with greater severity, than is correspondent to his personal character. It is to be remembered, that in *personal character* I include punishment endured, as well as actions performed. When a man has broken any law, and has afterwards suffered the penalty of that law; as he has, by the transgression, treated the law with contempt, so by suffering the penalty, he has supported the authority of it; and the latter makes a part of his personal character, as he stands related to that law, as really as the former.

With regard to the *third* kind of justice, as this is improperly called justice, as it comprehends all moral goodness, it is not at all opposed to *grace;* but comprehends that, as well as every other virtue, as truth, faithfulness, meekness, forgiveness, patience, prudence, temperance, fortitude, etc. All these are *right* and *fit*, and the contrary tempers or practices are *wrong* and *injurious* to God and the system; and therefore in this sense of justice are *unjust.* And even *grace* itself, which is favor to the ill-deserving, so far as it is wise and proper to be exercised, makes but a part of this kind of justice.

We proceed now to apply these explanations to the solution of the difficulty under consideration. The question is this: Is the pardon of the sinner through the atonement of Christ, an act of justice or of grace? To which I answer, that with respect to *commutative* justice, it is neither an act of justice nor of grace. Because commutative justice is not concerned in the affair. We neither owed money to the Deity, nor did Christ pay any on our behalf. His atonement is not a payment of our debt. If it had been, our discharge would have been an act of mere justice, and not of grace. To make the sinner also pay the debt, which had been already paid by Christ, would be manifestly injurious, oppressive, and beyond the bounds of commutative justice, the rule of which is, that every man retain and recover his own

property, and that only. But a debt being paid, by whomsoever it be paid, the creditor *has* recovered his property, and therefore has a right to nothing further. If he extort, or attempt to extort, anything further, he proceeds beyond his right and is guilty of injustice. So that if Christ had paid the debt for the believer, he would be discharged, not on the footing of grace, but of strict justice.

With respect to *distributive* justice the discharge of the sinner is wholly an act of grace. This kind of justice has respect solely to the personal character and conduct of its object. And then is a man treated justly, when he is treated according to his personal moral character. If he be treated more favorably than is correspondent to his personal character, he is the object of grace. I say *personal* character; for distributive justice has no respect to the character of a *third* person, or to anything which may be done or suffered by another person, than by him, who is the object of this justice, or who is on trial, to be rewarded or punished. And with regard to the case now before us, what if Christ has made atonement for sin? This atonement constitutes no part of the personal character of the sinner; but his personal character is essentially the same, as it would have been, if Christ had made no atonement. As the sinner, in pardon, is treated, not only more favorably, but infinitely more favorably, than is correspondent to his personal character, his pardon is wholly an act of infinite grace. If it were, in the sense of *distributive justice*, an act of justice, he would be injured, if a pardon were refused him. But as the case is, he would not be injured, though a pardon were refused him; because he would not be treated more unfavorably than is correspondent to his personal character.

Therefore, though it be true, that if a *third* person pay a debt, there would be no grace exercised by the creditor, in discharging the debtor, yet when a *third* person atones for a crime, by suffering in the stead of a *criminal*, there is an entire grace in the discharge of the criminal, and *distributive justice* still allows him to be punished in his own person. The reason is, what I have mentioned already, that justice in punishing crimes, respects the personal character only of the criminal; but in the payment of debts, it respects the recovery of property only. In the former case, it admits of any treatment which is according to his personal character; in the latter it admits of nothing beyond the recovery of property.

So that though Christ has made complete atonement for the sins of all his disciples, and they are justified wholly through his

redemption; yet they are justified wholly by grace. Because they *personally* have not made atonement for their sins, or suffered the curse of the law. Therefore they have no claim to a discharge on account of their own personal conduct and suffering. And if it is objected, that neither is a debtor discharged on account of anything which he hath done personally, when he is discharged on the payment of his debt by a third person; yet justice does not admit, that the creditor recover the debt again from the debtor himself; why then does it admit, that a magistrate inflict the punishment of a crime on the criminal himself, when atonement has been made by a substitute? The answer is, that justice in the these two cases, is very different, and respects very different objects. In *criminal* causes, it respects the personal conduct or character of the criminal, and admits of any treatment which is correspondent to that conduct. In *civil* causes, or matters of debt, it respects the restitution of property only, and this being made, it admits of no further demand.

In the *third* sense of justice before explained, according to which anything is just, which is right and best to be done; the pardon of the sinner is entirely an act of *justice*. It is undoubtedly most conducive to the divine glory, and general good of the created system, that every believer should be pardoned, and therefore, in the present sense of the word, it is an act of justice. The pardon of the sinner is equally an act of *justice*, if, as some suppose, he be pardoned not on account of the death of Christ, considered as an equivalent to the curse of the law denounced against the sinner; but merely on account of the positive obedience of Christ. If this be the mode and the condition of pardon established by God, doubtless pardon granted in this mode and on this condition, is most conducive to the divine glory and the general good. Therefore it is, in the sense of justice now under consideration, an act of *justice*; insomuch that if pardon were not granted in this mode, the divine glory would be tarnished, and the general good diminished, or the universe would suffer an injury. The same would be true, if God had in fact granted pardon, without any atonement, whether by suffering or obedience. We might have argued from that fact, that infinite wisdom saw it to be most conducive to the divine glory and the general good, to pardon without an atonement; and of course that if pardon had not been granted in this way, both the divine glory and general good, would have been diminished, and injustice would have been done to the universe. In the same sense the gift of Christ, to be our savior, his undertaking to save us, and every other gift of God to his creatures, are acts of *justice*.

But it must be remembered, that this is an improper sense of the word *justice*, and is not at all opposed to grace, but implies it. For all those divine acts and gifts just mentioned, though in this sense they are acts of *justice*, yet are at the same time, acts of *pure grace*.

In this sense of *justice*, the word seems to be used by the apostle Paul, Rom. 3: 26, "To declare his *righteousness*, (or *justice*,) that he might be *just* and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." That God might be just *to himself* and to the *universe*. Again in Psalm 85: 10, "Mercy and truth are met together, *righteousness* and peace have kissed each other." *Righteousness*, in the *distributive* sense, hath not kissed peace with respect to the sinner; so far as it speaks anything, it calls for his punishment. But the public good, and the divine glory admit of peace with the sinner. In the same sense the word occurs in the version of the Psalms in common use among us, where it is said "justice is pleased and peace is given." Again in the catechism of the assembly of divines, where they say, "Christ offered up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine *justice*."

Thus it appears, that the pardon of the sinner, in reference to *distributive* justice, which is the only proper sense of the word, with respect to this matter, is entirely an act of grace, and that, although he is pardoned wholly through the redemption of Jesus Christ.

It is in the same sense an act of grace, as the gift of Christ, or any other most gracious act of God. Though the sinner is pardoned wholly through the redemption of Christ, yet his pardon is an act of pure grace, because in it he is treated inconceivably more favorably than is correspondent to his personal character.

The pardon of the sinner, on this plan of the redemption or the atonement of Christ, is as entirely an act of grace, as if it had been granted on an atonement made, not by the sufferings of Christ, but merely by his active obedience. For if we suppose, that the atonement of Christ consists wholly in the obedience of Christ, not in his sufferings, in what sense would the pardon of the sinner be an act of grace, in which it is not an act of grace on the hypothesis concerning the atonement which hath been now stated? Pardon is no more procured by the payment of the sinner's debt, in the one case, than in the other. If it be said that Christ's suffering the curse of the law is the payment of the debt; I answer, this is no more a payment of the debt, than the obedience of Christ. If it be said that Christ's *obedience* only honors and magnifies the law; I answer, No more is done by the *sufferings* of Christ. It is true, that if the sinner be pardoned

on account of Christ's obedience, he is treated more favorably than is correspondent to his personal character. But the same is true, if he be pardoned on account of Christ's sufferings. If it be said, that in the one case, Christ *suffers*, as the substitute of the sinner; I answer, in the other case he *obeys* as the substitute of the sinner. In the one case, Christ has by his sufferings made it consistent with the general good, to pardon the sinner; in the other case, he has made the same thing consistent with the general good, by his *obedience*. And if this circumstance, that the pardon of the sinner is consistent with the general good, abolishes grace from his pardon in the one case, the same circumstance is productive of the same effect, in the other. The truth is, that in both cases, the whole *grace* of pardon consists in *this*, and *this only*, that the sinner is treated infinitely more favorably, than is correspondent to his personal character.

Again; according to this scheme of the atonement, the pardon of the sinner, is as wholly an act of grace, as if he had been pardoned without any atonement at all. If the sinner had been pardoned without any atonement, he would have been treated more favorably than is correspondent to his own character; and so he is, when pardoned through the atonement of Christ. In the former case, he would be pardoned, without a payment of his debt; so he is in the latter. If the measures taken by God, to secure the public good, those measures consisting neither in any personal doing or suffering of the sinner, nor in the payment of debt, be inconsistent with grace in the pardon of the sinner, in the one case; doubtless whatever measures are taken by God, to secure the public good in the other case, are equally inconsistent with grace in pardon. And no man will pretend, that if God do pardon the sinner without an atonement, he will pardon him in a way which is inconsistent with the public good. In this view of the objection, either the bare circumstance that the pardon of the sinner is consistent with the public good, is that which abolishes the grace of pardon; or it is the particular mode, in which the consistence of pardon and the public good, is brought about. If the bare circumstance of the consistence of pardon and the public good, be that which abolishes the grace of pardon; then it seems, that in order that any pardon may be gracious, it must be *inconsistent* with the public good; and therefore the pardon of the sinner without any atonement, being by the concession of the objector a gracious act, is inconsistent with the general good of the universe, and with the glory and perfections of God, and therefore can never be granted by God, as long as he is possessed of infinite perfection and goodness, whereby he is necessarily disposed to seek the good of the universal system, or of his own kingdom.

Or if it be said, that it is the *particular mode*, in which the consistence between pardon and the public good is brought about, which abolishes the grace of pardon; in this case it is incumbent on the objector, to point out what there is in the *mode*, which is opposed to grace in pardon. He cannot pretend, that in this mode, the debt of the sinner is paid, or that in repentance the sinner's personal character is so altered, that he now *deserves* no punishment. If this were the case, there would certainly be no grace in his pardon. It is no *grace*, and no *pardon*, not to punish a man who *deserves* no punishment. If the objector were to hold, that the personal character of the sinner is so altered by repentance, that he no longer *deserves* punishment, he would at once confute his own scheme of *gracious* pardon.

Neither can it be pretended, by the advocates for pardon without atonement, that there is any grace in pardon, in any other view than this, that the sinner is treated more favorably, than is correspondent to his personal character. And pardon on such an atonement as Christ hath made, is, in the same view, an act of grace. So that if the true idea of *grace*, with respect to this subject be, a treatment of a sinner more favorable than is correspondent to his personal character; the pardon of the sinner through the atonement of Christ, is an act of *pure grace*. If this be not the true idea of grace, let a better be given, and I am willing to examine it; and I presume that on the most thorough examination of the matter, it will be found, that there is as much grace in the pardon of the sinner, through the atonement of Christ, as without any atonement at all. Surely it will not be pleaded, that it is no act of grace to treat a sinner more favorably than is correspondent to his own personal character; if such treatment be not more favorable than is correspondent to the personal character of some other man, or some other being; and that it is no act of grace in a prince to pardon a criminal, from respect to the merits of the criminal's father; or that if one nobleman had been the murderer of another, there would have been no grace exercised in the pardon of the former, from respect to the intercession of some powerful court.

On every other hypothesis concerning the mode or condition of pardon, it must be allowed, that God dispenses pardon, from regard to some circumstance, or juncture of circumstances, which renders the pardon both consistent with the general good, and subservient to it; and whatever this be, whether the death of Christ, or anything else, provided it be not the payment of money, and provided the personal character of the sinner be the same, it is equally consistent or inconsistent with grace in pardon.

In short, the whole strength of this objection, in which the *Socinians* have so much triumphed, that complete atonement is inconsistent with grace in the pardon of the sinner, depends on the supposition, that the atonement of Christ consists in the literal payment of a debt which we owed to God; and this groundless supposition being set aside, the objection itself appears equally groundless, and vanishes like dew before the sun.

Whatever hypothesis we adopt concerning the pardon of the sinner, whether we suppose it to be granted on account of the death of Christ; or on account of the obedience of Christ; or absolutely without any atonement; all will agree in this, that it is granted in such a way, or on such conditions only, as are consistent with the general good of the moral system, and from a regard to some event or circumstance, or juncture of circumstances, which causes pardon to be consistent with the general good. And that circumstance or juncture of circumstances, may as well be called the *price* of pardon, the *ransom* of the sinner, etc. as the death of Christ. And whereas it is objected, that if God grant a pardon from respect to the atonement of Christ, we are under no obligation to God for the grace of pardon; I answer that whenever God grants a pardon, from respect to the circumstance or juncture of circumstances before mentioned, it may as well be pleaded, that the sinner *so* pardoned, is under no obligations of gratitude to God, *on account of his pardon;* for that it was granted from regard to the general good, or to that circumstance which rendered it consistent with the general good, and not from any gracious regard to *him;* or that if he be under any obligation to God, it is to him as the author of that circumstance or juncture of circumstances, which renders his pardon consistent with the general good, and not to him, as the dispenser of his pardon; as it is objected, that if, on the scheme of pardon through the atonement of Christ, we be under any obligation to God at all, it is merely on account of the provision of the atonement, and not on account of pardon itself.

Perhaps some, unwilling to relinquish this objection, may say, Though it be true, that the pardon of the sinner, on account of the atonement of Christ, be a *real* act of *grace;* would it not have been an act of *greater* grace, to pardon absolutely, without an atonement? This question is capable of a twofold construction. If the meaning be, Whether there would not have been more grace manifested *towards the sinner*, if his pardon had been granted without any atonement? I answer, by no means; because to put the question in this sense, is the same as

to ask, Whether the favor of pardon granted without an atonement, would not be greater in comparison with the sinner's personal character, than it is when granted on account of the atonement of Christ. Or whether there would not have been a greater distance between the good of pardon, and the demerit of the sinner's personal character, if his pardon had been granted without an atonement, than if it be granted on account of the atonement of Christ. But the good, the safety, the indemnity of pardon, or of deliverance from condemnation, is the very same, in whatever way it be granted, whether through an atonement or not, whether in a way of grace or in a way of debt, whether from a regard to the merits of Christ, or the merits of the sinner himself. Again, the personal character of the sinner is also the same, whether he be pardoned through an atonement or not. If his pardon be granted without an atonement, it makes not the demerit of his personal character and conduct the greater; or if it be granted on account of the atonement of Christ, it makes not the demerit of his personal character the less. Therefore as the good of pardon is the same, in whatever way it be granted, and the personal character of the sinner pardoned is the same; the distance between the good of pardon, and the demerit of the sinner's character is also the same, whether he be pardoned on account of the atonement of Christ, or absolutely, without any atonement. Of course the pardon of the sinner is not an act of greater grace *to him personally*, if granted without regard to any atonement, than if granted from regard to the atonement of Christ.

But perhaps the meaning of the question stated above, is, Whether, if the sinner had been pardoned, without an atonement, it would not have exhibited greater grace, *in the divine mind*, or greater goodness *in God*; and whether in this mode of pardon, greater good would not have accrued to the universe. The answer to this question, wholly depends on the *necessity* of an atonement, which I have endeavored briefly to show, in the preceding discourse. If an atonement be necessary to support the authority of the law and of the moral government of God, it is doubtless necessary to the public good of the moral system, or to the general good of the universe and to the divine glory. This being granted or established, the question just now stated, comes to this simply, whether it exhibits greater grace and goodness in the divine mind, and secures greater good to the universe, to pardon sin in such a mode, as is consistent with the general good of the universe; or in such a mode as is inconsistent with that important object;—a question which no man, from regard to his own reputation, would choose to propose.

SERMON III.

EPHESIANS 1: 7.—*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

Having in the preceding discourses, considered the particulars at first proposed, which were, That we can obtain forgiveness, in no other way, than through the redemption of Christ—the reason or ground of this mode of forgiveness—and the consistency between the complete atonement of Christ, and *free grace* in forgiveness; the way is prepared for the following inferences and reflections.

1. If the atonement of Christ be a substitute for the punishment of the sinner according to the divine law, and be designed to support the authority of that law, equally as the punishment of hell; then we may infer, that the atonement of Christ does not consist *in showing, that the divine law is just.* With regard to this, I venture to assert two things: That the obedience and death of Christ do not prove, that the divine law is just. That if they did prove this, still merely by that circumstance, they would make no atonement.

(1) The obedience and death of Christ do not prove, that the divine law is a just law. The sufferings of Christ no more prove this, than the punishment of the damned proves it. The former are the substitute of the latter, and were designed for substance to prove and exhibit the same truths, and to answer the same ends. But who will say that the torments of the damned prove the justice of the divine law? No more is this proved by the sufferings of Christ. If the justice of the divine law be called in question, the justice and moral perfection of God is of course equally called in question. This being the case, whatever he can do, whether by obedience or suffering, to testify the justice of the law, must be considered as the testimony of a party in his own cause; and also as the testimony of a being whose integrity is as much disputed, as the justice of the law. It cannot therefore be received as proof in the case. The testimony of God, whether given in obedience or suffering, so long as his character is disputed, as it will be, so long as the justice of his law is disputed; proves neither that the law is just, in *reality*, nor that it is so in *his own estimation.* A being of a disputed character may be supposed to testify, both contrary to reality, and contrary to his *own knowledge.* And as the character of

the *deity* is disputed, by those who dispute the justice of the divine law; so there is the same foundation to dispute the character and testimony of *the Son* of God. Therefore the obedience and death of Christ do not prove, that the divine law is just.

(2) If the obedience and death of Christ did prove that the law is just; still by this circumstance, they would make no atonement for sin. If it were a truth, that the obedience and death of Christ did prove the divine law to be just, and merely *on that account* made atonement, the ground of this truth would be, that *whatever* makes it manifest that the law is just, makes atonement. The essence of the atonement on this hypothesis, is placed in the manifestation of the justice of the divine law. Therefore this manifestation, however, or by whomsoever it be made, is an atonement. But as the law is really just, it was doubtless in the power of infinite wisdom to manifest the justice of it, to rational creatures, without either the obedience or the death of Christ, or of any other person. If it were not in the power of infinite wisdom to manifest the justice of the divine law, without the death of Christ; then if Christ had not died, but all men had perished according to the law, it never would have appeared that the law is just. But bare attention to the law itself, to the reason, ground, and necessity of it, especially when this attention is excited, and the powers of the mind are aided, by even such a divine influence, as God does in fact sometimes give to men of the most depraved characters, is sufficient to convince of the justice of the law. But there can be no doubt that the sanctifying and savingly illuminating influences of the spirit of God, without the obedience and death of Christ, would convince any man of the justice of the law. We have no more reason to dispute this, than to dispute, whether the angels who kept their first estate, did believe the justice of the law, before they were informed of the incarnation and death of Christ. According to this hypothesis therefore, all that was necessary to make atonement for mankind, was to communicate to them sanctifying grace, or to lead them to repentance; and as to Christ, he is dead in vain.

Besides; if the obedience and death of Christ did ever so credibly manifest the justice of the law, what atonement, what satisfaction for sin, would this make? how would this support the authority of the law? how would this make it appear, that the transgressor may expect the most awful consequences from his transgression? or that transgression is infinitely abominable in the sight of God? And how would the manifestation of the justice of the law, tend to restrain men from transgressing that law?

Whatever the effect of such manifestation might be on the minds of those innocent creatures, who have regard to justice or moral rectitude; yet on the minds of those who are disposed to transgress, and have lost the proper sense of moral rectitude, the manifestation would have no effectual tendency to restrain *them* from transgression; and therefore would in no degree answer the ends of the punishment threatened in the law, nor be any atonement for sin.

Perhaps some may suppose, that what has now been asserted, that the death or atonement of Christ does not prove the justice of God and of his law, is inconsistent with what hath been repeatedly suggested in the preceding discourses, that it is an end of the death or atonement of Christ, to manifest how hateful sin is to God. If the death of Christ manifest God's hatred of sin, it would seem that the same event must also manifest God's love of holiness and justice. In answer to this, I observe, that the death of Christ manifests God's hatred of sin and love of holiness, in the same sense as the damnation of the wicked manifests these, viz. on the supposition that the divine law is just and holy. If it be allowed that the divine law is just and holy, then everything done to support and execute that law, is a declaration in favor of holiness and against sin; or a declaration of God's love of holiness and of his hatred of iniquity. Both the punishment of the damned, and the death of Christ declare God's hatred of all *transgressions* of his law. And if that law be holy, to hate the transgressions of it, is to hate sin, and at the same time to love holiness. But if the law be not holy, no such consequence will follow; it cannot, on that supposition, be inferred from the divine hatred of *transgression*, that God either hates *sin*, or loves *holiness*.

2. Again; we may infer from the preceding doctrine, that the atonement of Christ does not consist essentially in his active or positive obedience. By atonement I mean that which, as a substitute for the punishment threatened in the law, supports the authority of that law, and the dignity of the divine government. But the obedience of Christ, even in the most trying circumstances, without any tokens of the divine displeasure against the transgressors of the law, would never support the authority of the law, and the dignity of the divine government. It by no means makes it appear, that it is an evil and bitter thing to violate the law, and that the violation of it deserves, and may be expected to be followed with most awful consequences to him, who dares to violate it. A familiar example may illustrate this matter. It is the rule or law of a certain family, that a particular child shall

steadily attend the school kept in the neighborhood, and that if he absent himself for a day, without license, he shall feel the rod. However after some time the child being weary of observing this law, does absent himself, and spend the day in play. At night the father being informed of it, arraigns the child, finds him guilty, and prepares to inflict the punishment, which he had threatened. At this instant, the brother of the offending child intercedes, acknowledges the reasonableness of the law, which his brother hath transgressed, confesses that he deserves the penalty, but offers himself to make satisfaction for his brother's offence. Being interrogated by what means he expects to make satisfaction; he answers, By going himself to school the next day. Now can any one suppose, that in this way the second child can make satisfaction for the offence of the first? Or that if the father were to accept the proposal, he would find the authority of his law, and the government of his family supported with dignity? Or that the offending child, or the other children of the family, would by this means be effectually deterred from future offences of the like nature? And however trying the circumstances of going to school may be, if those circumstances be no token of the father's displeasure at the disobedient child's transgression; still the going to school of the second child, will not make the least satisfaction for the offence of the first.*

I venture to say further, That the atonement of Christ not only did not consist *essentially* in his *active obedience*, but that his active obedience was *no part* of his atonement properly so called, nor essential to it. The perfect obedience of Christ was doubtless necessary to the due execution of his prophetical and kingly office; in order to his intercession; and also that the salvation of his disciples might be a reward of his obedience. But that it was necessary to support the authority of the divine law in the pardon of sinners, does not appear. If Christ himself could possibly have been a sinner, and had first made satisfaction for his own sin; it does not appear, but that afterward he might also satisfy for the sins of his people. If the pretender to the crown of Great Britain, should wage war against king *George*, in the course of the war should be taken, should be brought to trial, and be condemned to the block; will any man say that the king of France, by becoming the substitute of the pretender, and suffering in his stead, could not make atonement for the pretender, so as effec-

* *Objection.* The virtues of Christ's obedience to make atonement consists in this, that he undertook to obey in man's stead, when he was under no obligation so to do. *Answer.* Nor is the second child in the case stated above, under obligation to undertake to go to school for his brother.

tually to support the authority of the British laws and government, and discourage all future groundless pretensions to the British crown? Yet the king of France could plead no perfect obedience to the British laws. Even the sinner himself, *but upon the supposition of the infinite evil of sin*, could by his own sufferings atone for his sins. Yet he could not exhibit a perfect obedience.

Beside; if the *bare obedience* of Christ have made atonement, why could not the repentance and perfect obedience of Christ's people themselves, have answered, instead of the obedience of Christ? Doubtless if they had suffered the penalty of the divine law, it would have answered to support the authority of the law, and the vigor of the divine government, as really as the death of Christ. And since the eternal sufferings of the people of Christ, would have answered the same end of supporting the authority of the law, as the sufferings of Christ; why would not the eternal perfect *repentance* and *obedience* of the people of Christ, have answered the same end, as his obedience in their behalf? If it would, both the death and obedience of Christ as our substitute, are entirely in vain. If the elect had only been converted, and made perfectly and perseveringly obedient, it would have answered every purpose both of the death and obedience of Christ. Or if the obedience of Christ in the flesh were at all necessary, it was not necessary to support the authority of the law and government of God; but merely as it was most *wise*, that he should obey. It was necessary in the same sense only, as that the wind should, at this moment, blow from the north-east, and not from the south-west, or from any other quarter.

If the mere active obedience of Christ could have made atonement for sin, it may be difficult to account for the punishment of any sinners. If obedience without any demonstration of divine displeasure at sin, will answer every purpose of the divine authority and government, in some instances, why not in all instances? And if the obedience of sinners themselves will answer as really as that of Christ, why might not all men have been led by divine grace to repentance, and perfect subsequent obedience, and in that way been saved from the curse of the law? Doubtless they might; nor was there originally, nor is there now, without any consideration of the atonement of Christ, any other necessity of the punishment of any of mankind according to the law, than that which results from mere sovereign wisdom; in which sense indeed it was necessary that Christ should be given to be the Savior of sinners, that Paul should be saved, and that every other event should take place, just as it does take place.*

* Nor could it be reconciled with justice, and so not with wisdom. If

3. From our doctrine we also learn the great gain which accrues to the universe by the death of Christ. It hath been objected to the idea of atonement now exhibited, that if the death of Christ be an equivalent to the curse of the law, which was to have been inflicted on all his people, then there is on the whole no gain, no advantage to the universe; that all that punishment from which christians are saved, hath been suffered by Christ, and therefore that there is just as much misery and no more happiness, than there would have been, had Christ not died. To this I answer:

(1) That it is not true, that Christ endured an *equal quantity* of misery, to that which would have been endured by all his people, had they suffered the curse of the law. This was not necessary on account of the infinite dignity of his person. If a king were to condemn his son to lose an ear or a hand, it would doubtless be esteemed by all his subjects, a proof of far greater displeasure in the king, than if he should order some mean criminal to the gallows; and it would tend more effectually to support the authority of the law, for the violation of which this punishment should be inflicted on the prince.

(2) That if it were true, that Christ endured the very same *quantity* of misery, which was due to all his people; still by his death an infinite gain accrues to the universe. For though the misery, on this supposition, is in both cases the same, and balances itself; yet the positive happiness obtained by the death of Christ, infinitely exceeds that which was lost by Christ. As the eternal *Logos* was capable of neither enduring misery, nor losing happiness, all the happiness lost by the substitution of Christ, was barely that of the *man* Christ Jesus, during only thirty-three years; or rather during the *three* last years of his life; because it does not appear, but that during the rest of his life he was as happy as men in general, and enjoyed as much or more good, than he suffered evil. But the happiness gained by the substitution of Christ, is that of a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, kindreds, and people and tongues. Now if the happiness of one man for *three years*, or at most for *thirty-three*

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they, by perfect subsequent obedience had atoned for their sins, then to save them would be no more than to treat them according to their own characters; and to insist on another mode of salvation, more expensive and complicated, cannot be reconciled with justice or wisdom. And punishment was not threatened in order to support the authority of the law, as that authority might as well have been supported by mere obedience; and it might have been declared in the law, that if any should transgress they should be brought to perfect obedience and holiness; and beyond this, no other threatening was necessary.

years, be equal to that of an innumerable multitude throughout eternity, with the addition of the greater happiness, which Christ himself must enjoy now that he has brought so many sons to glory, beyond what he would have enjoyed, if all these had been plunged in inconceivable and endless misery; then it may be justly said, on the present hypothesis, that by the substitution of Christ, no advantage is gained to the universe. But if the latter infinitely exceed the former, the gain to the universe, even on the supposition, that the sufferings of Christ were equal to those, to which all his people were exposed, is infinite.

4. I may also hence take occasion to oppose an opinion which appears to me erroneous; which is, That the perfect obedience of Christ was in a great measure designed, to show us, that the divine law may be obeyed by men. It shows indeed, that it may be obeyed by a man in personal union with the divine nature. But how does this show, that it may be obeyed by a mere man? If we should also allow, that it shows, that the law may be obeyed by a man born into the world in perfect innocence, and who is not a fallen creature; yet how does this prove, that it may be obeyed by a fallen creature, dead in trespasses and sins? It is an undoubted truth, that there is no inability in men to obey the law, except that which is of a moral nature, consisting in the disinclination or disaffection of their own hearts; which does not in the least excuse them in their disobedience. But this is manifest by other considerations, than the perfect obedience of Christ; if it were not, it would not be manifest at all.

5. Another remark which naturally offers itself in discoursing on this subject is, that Christ's obedience of the *precepts* of the law, without submitting to the *curse*, would by no means prove the justice of that curse. This is the idea of some: That God sent his Son into the world, to obey the precepts of the law, and that his mere obedience of these, proves the justice both of the precepts and of the penalty of the law. I have already given the reasons by which I am made to believe, that the obedience of Christ does not prove the precepts of the law to be just. But if it did prove the *precepts* to be just, it would not therefore prove the *penalty too* to be just. As the precept of any law may be just and reasonable, yet may be enforced by a penalty which is unjust and cruel; so the proof that the precept is just, does not at all prove, but that the penalty may be unjust and cruel. Indeed as the penalty of any law is designed to support and enforce the precept of that law, so to prove the justice of the penalty, proves the justice of the precept; because not the slightest penalty can be just, when applied to enforce an unjust precept. But

this rule when inverted, doth not hold good. To prove the justice of a precept, does by no means prove the justice of the penalty by which that precept is enforced. So that if Christ have proved the precepts of the divine law to be just, this by no means proves the justice of its penalty. On the other hand, if Christ came to prove the justice of the law, and all that he has done to this effect, have an immediate reference to the precepts only; and if he have done nothing to establish the justice of the penal part, considered by itself; the aspect of the whole will be, that the penal part is unjustifiable, and that for this reason he did not pretend to justify it.

6. The subject which hath been under our consideration, also shows us, in what sense the sufferings of Christ were *agreeable* to God. It has been said, that it is incredible, that *mere pain* should be agreeable to a God of infinite goodness; that therefore the sufferings of Christ were agreeable to God only as a proof of the strength of the virtue of Christ, or of his disposition to obey the divine law. If by *mere pain* be meant *pain abstracted from the obedience of Christ*, I cannot see why it may not be agreeable to God. It certainly is, in the damned; and for the same reason might have been, and doubtless was, in the case of our Lord. The father was pleased with the pains of his son, as they were necessary to support the authority of his law and government, in the salvation of sinners.

7. Another reflection naturally suggested by this subject is, that in punishing some sinners according to the curse of the law, and in requiring an adequate atonement, in order to the salvation of others; God acts, not from any *contracted, selfish* motives, but from the most noble *benevolence* and regard to the public good. It hath often and long since been made a matter of objection to the doctrines of the future punishment of the wicked, and of the atonement of Christ; that they represent the Deity as having regard merely to his own honor and dignity, and not to the good of his creatures, and therefore represent him as deficient in goodness. But can it be pretended to be a proof of goodness in God, to suffer his own law, which is the perfect rule of virtue, to fall into contempt? However it might afford relief to some individuals, if God were to suffer his moral kingdom to be dissolved; can it be for the general good of the system of his creatures? Is it not manifestly necessary to the general good of the created system, that God's moral kingdom be upholden? and that therefore the authority of the divine law, and vigor of the divine government be maintained? If so, then it is al-

so necessary to the general good, that punishments be inflicted on the disobedient and lawless; or that they be pardoned in consequence only of a proper satisfaction or atonement.

So that those very doctrines which of all are made matter of the most objection to the divine goodness or benevolence, are clear proofs of goodness, and are absolutely necessary to it. If a prince should either make no laws for the government of his subjects, or should never execute them, but should suffer all crimes to pass with impunity; you would by no means esteem him a good prince, aiming at the good of his subjects; you would not hesitate to pronounce him either very weak or very wicked.

8. In reflecting on this subject, we may also notice the reason, why so many, who profess to be advocates for the doctrine of atonement, yet place the atonement in that, in which it does by no means consist. The principal reason seems to be, that they have conceived, that the idea of Christ's having suffered an equivalent to the punishment, to which all his people were exposed, is inconsistent with *grace* in their pardon. But if I have properly stated the ideas of *justice* and *grace*, it appears that there is as much grace in the pardon of sinners on account of such an atonement as that just mentioned, as there would be on account of an atonement consisting in mere obedience; or as there would be in pardon without any atonement at all.

9. Hence also we see, that the death of Christ in our stead, is not useless or in vain. The opposers of Christ's substitution and atonement, assert, that no good end is answered by the sufferings of an innocent, amiable, and virtuous person, in the stead of the guilty. But surely to support the authority of the law and of the moral government of God, is not a vain or unimportant end. It was not in vain that Zaleucus, having made a law, that all adulterers should have both their eyes put out, and his own son being the first who transgressed, put out one of his own eyes and one of his son's. Hereby he spared his son in part, and yet as effectually supported the authority of his law, as if it had been literally executed. Nor was it in vain, that during the late war, a soldier in the American army of a robust constitution, pitying his fellow-soldier of a slender constitution, who was condemned to receive a certain number of stripes, petitioned to be put in the place of the criminal, and actually received the stripes. For the authority of the martial law was effectually supported, and perhaps by this means, the life or future health and service of the criminal were preserved, and would otherwise have been lost.

Neither was the death of Christ in the stead of sinners, any injury done to an innocent person. As well may we say, that Za-

leucus, or the soldier just mentioned, was injured; or that a man is injured, when another man receives the money of him, which he voluntarily tenders in payment of the debt of a third person; or that a man is injured by the surgeon, who takes off his leg to preserve his life, though the man himself consents, and desires him so to do.

10. Again; we may observe in what sense *justice* and *the divine law are satisfied* by the death of Christ; and in what sense the atonement of Christ is properly called a *satisfaction*. It is only the third kind of justice before mentioned, that is *satisfied* by Christ. No man, for the reasons already given, will pretend that *commutative* justice is satisfied by Christ; for the controversy between God and the sinner is not concerning property. Nor is *distributive* justice satisfied. If it were, there would indeed be no more grace in the discharge of the sinner, than there is in the discharge of a criminal, when he hath endured the full punishment, to which according to law, he hath been condemned. If distributive justice were satisfied, it would have no further claim on the sinner. And to punish him, when this kind of justice has no claim upon him, is to treat him more unfavorably or severely than his personal character deserves. If distributive justice be satisfied, the penitent believer, considered *in his own person*, deserves even according to the strictness of the divine law, no punishment; and that merely because he repents and believes; and if so, repentance and faith satisfy the law, or are the curse of it, as I have already shown. If distributive justice be satisfied, it *admits* of no further punishment, and to punish the individual further, would be as positively *unjust*, as to continue a man's punishment, after he hath endured the full penalty of any law. If distributive justice be satisfied by Christ, in the behalf of sinners, then the rule of distributive justice is not the personal character of a man, but the character of his friend, his advocate, or representative; and any man has a right, on the footing of distributive justice, to be treated according to the character of his friend or representative. Therefore if a subject rebel against his sovereign, and procure a man of a most unexceptionable and amiable character, to represent him and plead his cause before his sovereign, he has a right on the footing of distributive justice, to be treated according to the character of his representative; and if he be not thus treated, he suffers an injury; he is abused. On this principle, no prince or magistrate will have a right to punish, for any crime, a subject who can procure a man of a virtuous life, to represent him and plead his cause.

But perhaps it will be said, that distributive justice is satisfied

by the death of Christ, because he placed himself in our stead, and suffered in our room; and that whenever a person thus substitutes himself for another, and suffers the punishment due to that other, that other hath a right to a discharge, as distributive justice is then satisfied. Now according to this objection, the true idea of distributive justice is, to treat a man according to the sufferings of his representative. And if according to the *sufferings* of his representative, why not according to the *obedience* of his representative. And this brings us just where we were; that every man may *in justice demand*, to be treated according to the character of his representative; which is absurd.

Distributive justice therefore is not at all satisfied by the death of Christ. But general justice to the Deity and to the universe is satisfied. That is done by the death of Christ which supports the authority of the law, and renders it consistent with the glory of God and the good of the system, to pardon the sinner.

In the same sense the *law of God* is satisfied by the death of Christ; I mean as the divine glory and the general good, which are the great ends of the law, are secured. In this sense only is the atonement of Christ, properly called a *satisfaction;* God is satisfied, as by it his glory and the good of his system are secured and promoted.

Objection. But is not distributive justice displayed in the death of Christ? *Answer.* The question is ambiguous; if the meaning be, Is not distributive justice satisfied? I answer, for the reasons already given, in the *negative.* If the meaning be, Is there not an exhibition made in the death and sufferings of Christ, of the punishment to which the sinner is justly liable? I answer in the affirmative; distributive justice is, in this sense, displayed in the death of Christ. But it is no more displayed, than the *punishment* of the sinner is displayed, in the death of Christ.

It may be proper here to notice the sense, in which justice *admits* of the salvation of sinners. It hath been said, that justice *admits* of several things which it does not *demand;* that it *admits* of the salvation of Paul, but does not *demand* it. And it would *admit* also of the damnation of Paul, but does not *demand* that. But in these instances the word *justice* is used in two very different senses, which ought to be carefully distinguished. When it is said *justice* admits of the salvation of Paul, the third kind of justice before described, must be intended. The *general good* admits it; neither the glory of God nor the good of the system, opposes it.

But distributive justice, which requires every man to be treated according to his personal character, does not admit that Paul

should be saved. So far as this kind of justice says anything concerning this matter, it demands that Paul be punished according to law. And if this justice be made the rule of proceeding in the case, Paul will inevitably be cast off. This kind of justice no more admits of the salvation of Paul than it admits of the salvation of *Judas*. But it is said, that "justice admits of the salvation of Paul, but does not *demand* it." Justice to the universe *does* demand it, as fully as admit of it, and the universe would suffer an injury, if he were not to be saved; but justice to the universe, neither *demands* nor *admits* of the salvation of Judas. Whereas distributive justice to Paul personally, as much demands that he be not saved, as that Judas be not saved.

But if we will make a distinction between what justice *admits* and what it *demands*, the true and only distinction seems to be this; justice *admits* of anything which is not positively *unjust*; of any favor however great or manifold; whereas it *demands* nothing, but barely what is just, without the least favor, and which being refused, positive injustice would be done. Distributive justice then admits of the salvation of Judas or of any other sinner; as, surely, no injustice would be done Judas in his salvation; but it demands not this, as it is a mere favor, or something beyond the bounds of mere justice; or it is no injury to Judas, that he is not saved. Neither does distributive justice demand the salvation of Paul. But public justice both admits and demands both the salvation of Paul and the damnation of Judas. On the other hand, it neither admits nor demands the damnation of Paul, nor the salvation of Judas. But distributive justice, (according to the present distinction between the meaning of the words *admit*, and *demand*,) though it *admits* both of the salvation and damnation of both Paul and Judas; yet *demands* neither the salvation nor damnation of one or the other. Or, to express the same thing in other words; no injustice would be done either to Paul or Judas personally, if they were both saved or both damned. Distributive justice never demands the punishment of any criminal, in any instance; because no injury would be done him, if he were graciously pardoned. It demands only that a man be not punished being innocent; or be not punished beyond his demerit; and that he be rewarded according to his positive merit.

These observations may help us to understand a distinction, which to many has appeared groundless or perplexing; I mean the distinction of the merit of *condignity* and merit of *congruity*. Merit of both these kinds refers to rewards only, and has

no reference to punishments; and that is deserved by a merit of *condignity* which cannot be withholden without positive injury. That is deserved by a merit of *congruity* which is a proper expression of the sense which the person rewarding, has of the moral excellency of the person rewarded; which however may be withholden without positive injury. Of the former kind is the merit which every good and faithful citizen has, of protection in his person, liberty and property, and the merit of a laborer who has earned his wages. These cannot be withholden without positive injury. Of the latter kind is the merit, which some eminently wise and virtuous citizens have, of distinguishing honors or marks of esteem. If these be withholden, the proper objects of them, may indeed be said to be neglected, but not positively injured.

11. This subject teaches also, in what sense God was *under obligation* to accept, on the behalf of the sinner, the mediation and atonement of Christ. It hath been said, that when Christ offered to make atonement for sinners, God was under the same obligation to accept the offer, as a creditor is to accept the proposal of any man, who offers to pay the debt of another. This is not true; because in matters of property, all that a creditor hath a right to, is his property. This being offered him, by whomsoever the offer be made, he has the offer of his right; and if he demand more, he exceeds his right; and he has no more right to refuse to give up the obligation, on the offer of a third person to pay the debt, than to refuse the same, when the same offer is made by the debtor himself. All will own, that if a creditor were to refuse to receive payment, and give up the obligation, when the debtor offers payment, it would be abusive and unjust; and let any man assign a reason why it is not equally abusive and unjust, not to receive the payment, and to give up the obligation, when payment is offered by a third person.

But it is quite otherwise in atoning for crimes, in which *distributive*, not *commutative* justice is concerned. As the rule of distributive justice is *the personal character* of the person to be rewarded or punished, and not *property*; if a magistrate refuse to accept any substitute, and insist on punishing the criminal himself, he treats him no otherwise, than according to his personal character, and the criminal suffers no injustice or abuse. Nor is the magistrate under any obligation of distributive justice, or justice to the criminal himself, to accept a substitute. It is true, that the circumstances of the case may be such, that it may be most conducive to the public good, that the offered substitute be

accepted; in this case *wisdom* and goodness or public justice will require that it be accepted, and the criminal discharged.

This leads me to observe, that it hath also been said that when Christ offered to become a substitute, and to make atonement for sinners, God was under no obligation to accept the proposal. This, I conceive, is as wide of the truth, as that he was under the same obligation to accept the proposal, as a creditor is to accept the proposal of a third person to pay the debt of his friend. The truth is, The glory of God and the greatest good of the moral system, did require, that Christ should become a substitute for sinners; and that his offered substitution should be accepted by God. This was dictated and recommended by both wisdom and goodness. So far therefore as wisdom and goodness could infer an obligation on the father, to accept the substitution of his son, he was *under obligation* to accept it. But this obligation was only that of the third kind of justice before explained, a regard to the general good.

12. This subject further teaches us, that that constitution which requires an atonement, in order to the pardon of the sinner, is nothing *arbitrary*. That divine constitution which is wise and good, as being necessary to the good of the moral system, is not *arbitrary*. But if an atonement was necessary, in order to support the authority of the divine law, and the honor, vigor and even existence of the divine moral government, while sinners are pardoned; undoubtedly that constitution which requires an atonement, in order to the pardon of the sinner, is the dictate of wisdom and goodness, and by no means, of an *arbitrary* spirit.

13. Hence we also learn in what sense the death of Christ renders God *propitious* to sinners. It does so only as it supports the authority of his law and government, and renders the pardon of sinners consistent with the good of the system, and the glory of God.

Finally; this subject teaches the groundlessness of that objection to the doctrine of atonement, that it represents the Deity as *inexorable*. If to refuse to pardon sinners unless it be in a way which is consistent with the good of the moral system, is to be inexorable; then that God will not pardon sinners without atonement, or in a way which is inconsistent with the authority of his law, and with the authority and even existence of his moral government is indeed a proof, that God is inexorable. But if it be not an instance of inexorability, that God will not pardon sinners, unless it be in a way which is consistent with the good of the moral system, there is no ground to object to the doctrine of

atonement, that it represents the Deity as inexorable. On the other hand, that God requires an atonement in order to pardon, is an instance and proof of truly divine goodness; and if he were to pardon without an atonement, it would prove, that he is destitute of goodness and regardless, not only of his own glory, but of the true happiness of the system of his moral creatures.

SERMON IV.

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE TRUTH, THE END OF PREACHING.*

2 CORINTHIANS 4: 2.—*But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

IN the preceding chapter the apostle is describing the excellency of the gospel. He compares it with the law; and though he allows that *that* was glorious, yet he asserts that the gospel exceeds in glory. This is the glorious gospel which was committed to Paul and the other apostles. Hence he begins this chapter in the manner he does: "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy we faint not." As if he had said, Since we have so glorious a gospel to preach, we faint not in preaching, defending, and propagating it; but under all persecutions, we persevere in this work. Nor is that all; but we have preached and propagated the gospel with *integrity* or *honesty*, not practising, in the prosecution of our ministry, any dishonest or shameful arts. The word rendered *dishonesty*, more properly means *shame*; and indeed all dishonest, crafty, deceitful arts, are truly shameful; especially in a minister of the simple gospel.

As the several expressions of dishonesty, craftiness, deceit, are but exegetical of each other, they need not be considered distinctly; the sum of what is intended by them all is included in the hidden things of dishonesty or shame.—I shall therefore,

I. Mention some of the hidden things of dishonesty probably intended in the text.

II. Inquire what it is so to manifest the truth, as to commend ourselves to the consciences of men.

III. Show that such manifestation of the truth is the proper and immediate end of preaching the gospel.

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I. *I am to mention some of the hidden things of dishonesty, probably intended by the apostle in our text.*

These comprehend all the deceitful, covert, underhand practices, into which a minister may fall.

1. One of these hidden things of dishonesty is, to *keep back a part* at least *of the truth*, when it is necessary or profitable, that the whole, or that part, should be made known. This is sometimes done in order to avoid offence. The truth is often extremely unpopular; or at least displeasing to a number. They find their own tempers and practices condemned by it, and their whole characters set in an odious point of light. This is hard to be borne. At the same time perhaps, they find all their fond hopes of the favor of the Deity in this life, and of eternal felicity in the life to come, shaken or totally overthrown; and find themselves left in a state of painful apprehension, or absolute despair, as to their eternal safety. This is a state so disagreeable and intolerable, that few men will be easy under that preaching, which is the occasion of it, or feel a friendly disposition toward the preacher. In these circumstances men will generally soon grow uneasy, and whatever professions of friendship they may have made, they will soon become his enemies, and at first perhaps secretly, afterwards openly, oppose him.

But for a minister of the gospel to make any, and especially a considerable number of his hearers, and those perhaps the chief and most influential of his whole congregation, enemies to himself, is extremely undesirable. He naturally wishes to live in perfect friendship with them all, and therefore to please them all. This is for his interest, as well as for his tranquillity. From these sources arises a very strong temptation to suppress, in his preaching, those truths of the gospel, which are unpopular, disagreeable, or mortifying to the depraved hearts of mankind.

Under the influence of this temptation, he may altogether omit to preach some doctrines, though he really believes them; such as the doctrines of God's eternal, absolute and immutable decrees; of human depravity; of the necessity of regenerating grace, and the divine sovereignty in the dispensation of that grace. Or if he do not totally suppress any truth; if he declare a part of it only, he may as really teach error, as if he were directly to assert it. For example: if he preach in general terms the goodness or mercy of God, and explain not the nature and object of it, nor show that it consists in seeking and promoting the *general* good of the created system and his own glory; not the good of every individual, wherein it is inconsistent with the general good; if he say nothing of the holiness and justice of God, which are indeed

but branches of the divine goodness, and which in a proper explanation of goodness, will naturally come into view; I say, by discoursing in general terms of the goodness and mercy of God without descending to proper particulars, a minister will naturally make his hearers believe, that God by his goodness is seeking and will secure the eternal happiness of every individual of mankind. By this mode of preaching, thousands have been brought into this belief; this is the rock on which multitudes have split. This seems to be the main pillar of deism; the men of that class groundlessly concluding, that because God is indeed aiming at the good or happiness of his creatures, therefore he is aiming at the happiness, not merely of the system in general, but of every individual. Whereas it remains to be proved, that the greatest happiness of the created system implies the happiness of every individual; and nothing is more evident, than that if God is aiming at the greatest happiness of every individual, he entirely fails of his end; inasmuch as individuals, even in this life, are extremely miserable.

Again; by dwelling only on the sufficiency of gospel grace, and saying nothing of the conditions on which the promises of the gospel are suspended, a minister may impress on the minds of his hearers, the idea, that those promises are wholly unconditional. By preaching up the necessity and efficacy of faith, without explaining the nature of it, the hearers may be led to think, that the justifying faith of the gospel is a mere assent of the understanding, without any right temper of heart. By insisting abundantly on good works, the excellency and necessity of them, and leaving the matter thus; people may conceive, that they may obtain justification by their own good works. These may serve as instances of error taught, not by direct and positive assertion; but by a partial exhibition of the truth; and they all belong to the hidden things of dishonesty, or to the handling of the word of God deceitfully.

2. To deliver the truth in *general* and *equivocal terms*, is a practice of dishonesty, similar to that just mentioned. This is one way of suppressing the truth. The most pungent and mortifying truths will be tolerable, if delivered in general terms. In this case, every man may understand and receive it, in a manner agreeable to his own taste or wishes. But should the preacher explain himself and descend to some particulars, he would no doubt offend some, and perhaps all his hearers. By the use of only general terms, the real truth is kept out of sight. Thus a man may preach, in general terms, the sovereignty of God, and say nothing but the truth on this subject; yet his hearers shall

not know whether he mean a sovereignty over the natural, or over the moral world; a sovereignty in ruling the sun, moon and stars, or in ruling the hearts of men. Or if the preacher speak expressly of God's sovereignty in the moral world, still it may not be clear, whether he intend merely a sovereignty in ruling the nations and kingdoms of the world, or in ruling individuals. Or again; if he shall explain himself so far, that it shall appear, that he means a sovereignty over individuals, still it may be doubtful, whether he would teach a sovereignty which is absolute and efficacious, or one that is merely suasive, and efficacious only so far as men will be drawn by arguments and motives.

Again; a preacher may say much of the depravity of the human heart; nay, may declare it to be universal, affecting every faculty of the human mind; yet he may never teach that this depravity is *entire* and *total*, and his hearers may never know what his ideas are as to this point. He may say much of regeneration, and of the grace of God in it; yet it may never be discernible by his preaching, whether he suppose it to be wrought by the immediate power and agency of God, or by light and moral suasion. He may say much of justification by faith; yet it may not be clear, whether he means, that we are justified by the gospel, the object of our faith and by the obedience of it; or by the exercise of faith in Christ, and by his righteousness which is apprehended by faith. It may be equally uncertain, whether by justifying faith he mean a bare speculative assent of the understanding, or such a view of the truth as implies a reconciliation of heart; a belief that Christ died for me in particular, or a cordial belief and reception of Christ as a glorious and all sufficient Savior, without any persuasion that I have already an interest in him. He may say much of love to God, and to Christ; but it may not appear, whether this is to be exercised on interested or disinterested principles; whether it must be a love of God's character, or only of his benefits. He may say much of repentance and the necessity of it; yet it may be altogether uncertain, whether he would teach a repentance, which may be excited merely by a dread of punishment, or one which arises from a heartfelt sense of the vileness of sin. He may say much of *holiness;* but leave it in the dark, whether true holiness consist in mere external morality, or primarily in supreme love to God and universal love to men, and secondarily in that general obedience which arises from his temper of love.

Thus the whole system of divine truth may be misunderstood or perverted, by being exhibited in too general terms. This is *general* preaching, and is opposed to that which is *particular*

and *plain*. As men are naturally inclined to understand divine truth in a manner agreeable to their own wishes; there is on that account the greater danger, that error will be received instead of truth, and therefore the greater necessity that the preacher be most plain and particular.

3. To *coincide*, in preaching or discipline, with the *groundless prejudices* of the people, with regard to things important, is another hidden thing of dishonesty, and an instance of walking in craftiness and handling the word of God deceitfully. A man who undertakes to preach the gospel, may have no principles at all, or at most, none but such as he may be willing to give up, in order to serve his interest. Therefore, if it be most for his interest to be silent as to any particular subject of doctrine or discipline, he *will be* silent; or concealing his own belief, he will preach according to that of his hearers. No class of men are under so strong temptation to sacrifice their own sentiments to others, as ministers of the gospel; especially because in general they are so dependent on their people. It is generally disagreeable to a man to be singular and to oppose his neighbors, though he be entirely independent of them. But if he be dependent on them for his daily subsistence, then to oppose them, and openly to avow sentiments by which they are offended, and perhaps condemned in their moral conduct, or spiritual estate; this is often too much for frail human nature.

Yet this must be done by a minister of the gospel, if he will regard either his duty, his honor, or a consistency of character. Can we pretend it is our duty to give up evangelical truth, on which the salvation of the souls of men depends, or to keep it out of sight, and to preach the contrary errors, which may lead them to eternal death, in order that we may maintain friendship with them, and thus procure our daily bread? Is this acceptable to God? Will it stand the scrutiny of him, whose eyes are as a flame of fire? Is this fulfilling the contract which we have made with men? They on their part contract to support us, not that we may humor and flatter them, with regard to their spiritual concerns; not that we may preach errors to them, even although those errors may be adopted by themselves; but that we may preach the real truths of the gospel. And if we do not honestly preach the truth, according to our knowledge and understanding; I see not but that we practise the hidden things of dishonesty, grossly violate the contract into which we have entered, and on that very account are justly amenable to them, at the common human tribunals.

4. Nearly allied to the foregoing particular, is preaching or

undertaking the ministry, for the sake of the *salary* or the *living*. Though a minister preach the truth, and preach it fully and clearly, descending to proper particulars; yet he may do all chiefly for the sake of the temporal reward. It is at least to be suspected, that some undertake the ministry from this motive. But what trifling is this with sacred things! It is wholly perverting the institution of the evangelical ministry. Doubtless they who preach the gospel, have a right to live of the gospel, and to enter on this business with this expectation. But this is very different from entering on it chiefly from the motive of obtaining a living. Whatever some may do *in fact*, I presume no man would choose *professedly* to undertake the work of the ministry solely or chiefly, that he may procure a living. But why would not any man choose to profess and avow this motive? Undoubtedly because he knows that it is low and mercenary, unworthy of the ministerial character, not agreeable to the mind of the Great Author of this and all other institutions of the gospel, nor to the understanding of men in general, particularly of those who are committed to his charge in his ministerial office. Therefore to act from this principle, in this instance, is to practise the hidden things of dishonesty.

5. If we neglect *to inquire, to study* and *to search diligently after the truth*, this is another hidden thing of dishonesty. This neglect sometimes takes place through indolence, and inconsideration; sometimes through design.

(1) Through *indolence* and *inconsideration*. To indulge indolence and inconsideration in such important matters as those which relate to the ministry of the gospel, certainly belongs to the hidden things of dishonesty and shame. For us, who have taken upon ourselves this sacred office, to be inattentive to truth, inconsiderate with regard to the worth and importance of it, or indolent in our researches after it, is not to act an honest, and reputable, but a dishonest and shameful part. Ministers of the gospel are to be ensamples to their flocks in general, and in the virtues of industry, and a diligent employment of their time, as well as in all other virtues. Shall a day-laborer, who is indolent in his work, or careless as to the manner in which he performs it, lose all character and employment? Shall a tradesman, be for the same reason entirely neglected and discarded? Yet shall a minister of the gospel, who has so many more, and greater, and stronger motives and obligations to exert himself, and to be diligent in his work, be indolent, careless and devoted to his ease? No, let no such character be known among us. A man of this character defrauds the people among whom he is called to be

a minister, not of their property, but of divine truth, the sincere milk of the word, the bread of life; he defrauds himself of the reward of a faithful servant; he defrauds God of that service which is his indispensable due; he violates numerous express precepts of holy writ, and his own solemn vows; he brings reproach on the cause of Christ, and gives occasion to the adversary to blaspheme.

(2) Sometimes, ministers may neglect to study and search out the truth, *through design.* They choose to be ignorant of many important doctrines, as when a controversy happens to arise concerning those doctrines, their ignorance affords them an easy plea to avoid all conversation on the subjects, and consequently all the offence, which they might give by taking a decided part on either side of the question. As they are able to say that they are ignorant of the subject, they are easily excused from giving their opinion, they offend no party, and obtain no ill name. But is not this a hidden practice of dishonesty? Is it honest, is it honorable in a christian minister, thus voluntarily to remain ignorant of important christian truth? When the truth labors, to stand by, and do nothing in support of it? and this only that he may sail easily and quietly down the stream of human life; and be wafted along by the fresh gales of popular applause? No, such a practice belongs to the hidden things of dishonesty and shame.

There are also hidden things of dishonesty in discipline, as well as in preaching; as when a minister neglects to preach on the subject of church discipline, to explain the nature of it, to inculcate the duty and importance of it; when he connives at the faults of gross offenders; when he always excuses himself from this disagreeable and mortifying service. True, it is most desirable, both in respect of the minister's influence and usefulness among his people, and in respect of his comfort and leisure for his ministerial studies; that some of the brethren bring forward matters of discipline, by taking the previous steps and by making proper complaint to the church. But what if others neglect their duty in this particular? Is this matter therefore to be neglected by the minister too? I think not. The case may happen, in which it may be his duty to step forward, and to exhibit an example in every part of christian discipline. And so again, it is a hidden practice of dishonesty, for a minister, in a case of discipline, to flatter the accused brother, by conversation or conduct, and to make him believe, that he himself acts only of necessity in the execution of his office; that others force him on, and that the discipline hath been begun and carried on contrary to his

mind, though he may be fully convinced that the accused is justly liable to discipline in the case.

These are some of the hidden things of dishonesty to which ministers of the gospel are liable. The temptation to these is very great, arising from the consideration of their ease, profit and subsistence. Yet Christ requires them to take up the cross and follow him. What if Christ himself had acted on these principles of his ease and convenience? Or what if his apostles after him, and his ministers in all ages, had adopted this line of conduct? Or what if they should now universally adopt it? It is manifest it would soon end in the general disorder and confusion of the church, and the general prevalence of error and irreligion.

II. *I am, as was proposed, to consider what it is so to manifest the truth, as to commend ourselves to the consciences of men.*

It is to manifest the truth in such a manner as to obtain the testimony of the consciences of those, to whom we speak, in favor of the truth that we deliver. The word here translated *commending*, might well have been rendered *presenting*. The apostles presented the truth, or presented themselves in the manifestation of the truth, or with the light of truth shining around them, to the consciences of their hearers; and thus obtained the testimony of their consciences in favor of the truth which they preached. For the consciences of men rightly informed, ever bear a faithful testimony to the truth. The conscience is the principle in human nature, by which the true preacher of the gospel may take the most advantageous hold of sinners. He cannot by any manifestation of the truth, convert, or lead them to real repentance; but he may gain the assent and testimony of their consciences in favor of the truth, and against themselves as sinners. To this end the truth must be manifested fully and clearly; one truth as well as another; and all truths in their proper connection and dependence on each other. All divine truth properly apprehended, is suited to touch the conscience; and in order to this effect, it needs only to be manifested and seen. But some modes of manifesting the truth, are more advantageous than others. As,

1. The most *perspicuous* mode of manifestation is always the best. Though the truth be *obscurely* manifested, it may be *really* manifested. But when obscurely manifested, it is in no measure so likely to affect the conscience. The more clear the exhibition we make of it is, the more likely is it, to be attended with its proper effect; the more shall we commend ourselves to the consciences of our hearers.

2. To manifest the truth in an *engaging*, *inviting* manner, is often of a happy tendency to touch the conscience. The more the truth is exhibited in an engaging and inviting manner, the more will it naturally draw the attention; and the more the attention is drawn to the truth, the greater advantage will it have to take hold of the conscience. As the truth cannot affect the conscience at all, unless it is known or comes into view; so in proportion as it more engages the attention, it comes the more thoroughly into view; and consequently, for the same reason, that the truth, when known at all, is more likely to affect the conscience, than when it is not known, so the more thoroughly it is known and attended to, the greater is the probability that the conscience will be affected by it. This shows the use and importance of a thorough application of the powers of eloquence, and all the address of oratory. The minister of the gospel may make a very advantageous use of the most lively descriptions, the strongest expressions, the boldest figures, the greatest zeal, and all the beauty and force of pronunciation and gesture.

But it must be remembered, that it is here taken for granted, that by all these arts of oratory, the attention of the hearers is attracted to the *truth*, and not to the speaker, or to his ingenuity and address. The difference between these two cases, is very great and manifest. If the attention is excited and fixed upon the *truth itself*, the aforesaid arts of oratory are employed to excellent purpose, and commend the truth to the conscience. But if they are employed only to draw the attention to the *preacher*, and cause the hearers to admire him; they are employed to no good purpose at all; nay, to bad purpose, as they tend to divert the attention from the truth itself, and therefore do hurt instead of good.

3. In order to the most advantageous manifestation of the truth, we shall *dwell most* on those subjects which are the most *important*. Though every truth is a real truth; yet every truth is not of equal importance. That the Jews who crucified our Lord, stripped him of his own clothes, and put a scarlet robe on him; and that they platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, are real truths; yet these are not of equal importance with the death of Christ, and the atonement made thereby for the sins of mankind; or with the proclamation of pardon and salvation through faith in Christ. Now in preaching the gospel, we should dwell on each truth according to its importance and practical influence.

4. It is very advantageous, in preaching, *to describe the human heart*, and its affections, according to real life. For as face

answers to face in water, so doth the heart of man to man. In this mode of procedure, the preacher, though ignorant of the real characters and tempers of particular persons, will often hit them most exactly; so that they shall think, that of design, and from a knowledge of their case, he hath adapted his discourse with a particular reference to them. A thorough knowledge of human nature in general, and of his own heart in particular, is exceedingly useful and necessary for every minister of the gospel.

5. It is also useful and of a direct tendency to touch the conscience, to *lead* men, in a view of the truth, to a *particular examination* of themselves. This often has a wonderful and most happy effect.

6. It is sometimes useful to exhibit the truth in *parabolical representations*, as the prophet did to David, when he would convict him of his sin in the matter of Uriah. Such representations will often be justly applied by the hearers to themselves. Some times, however, it is useful and necessary for the minister to apply them, as the prophet did to David, saying, "Thou art the man."

III. *Such a manifestation of the truth as tends to affect the conscience, is the proper and immediate end of preaching the gospel.*

If this is not the proper and immediate end of preaching, what is? Doubtless the chief and ultimate end is the salvation of men, in a way that is subservient to the divine glory. But how is this to be effected? Not surely by pleasing and amusing mankind; nor by flattering and deceiving them; but by instruction and persuasion. Men are to be taught the way to heaven, and to be persuaded by all rational and scriptural arguments to walk in it. They are to be both instructed and persuaded by a manifestation of the truth. Nor is it enough to furnish men's minds with mere speculative knowledge; the truth should be taught in a practical view, as it relates to practice and leads to it. The truth really exhibited, will naturally commend itself to the conscience, so far as to gain its assent to duty, and its dissent from sin; to make it approve of what is right, and condemn what is wrong. So far therefore it both leads to a right practice, and restrains from a wrong one; and thus happily subserves the *chief* and *ultimate* end of preaching.

Indeed we are not to expect that the truth alone, without a divine influence, will convert the soul; yet as it will awaken the conscience, and these awakenings and convictions ordinarily precede conversion, and render it more probable, that the subject of them will attain to the true grace of God; in this sense, the faith-

ful exhibition of the truth happily tends to the great end of preaching, which is the salvation of souls in the way before mentioned.

The same manifestation of the truth tends also to the edification of saints in faith and holiness. It tends to convince them wherein they have heretofore sinned and come short of their duty; points out to them their duty in future; and persuades them to avoid sin and practise holiness. In both these respects it tends to their edification.

It is by a faithful exhibition of the truth, that sinners are to be awakened and led to repentance, and saints are to be edified and quickened; and so the salvation of men is to be effected.

If the advancement of true religion in the world, is an end, and a great end of preaching (and I presume none will deny that it is) this end is to be obtained, only so far as the truth is exhibited. True religion is wholly built on the truth, and on a knowledge of it; and any affections of a religious nature, are only so far genuine and virtuous, as they are built on a view of the truth. Whatever affections are not built on the truth, and are not exercised in the view of it, are either directly opposed to true religion, or are mere wild enthusiasm.

Having thus pointed out some of the things of dishonesty intended in the text—having shown what it is so to manifest the truth as to commend ourselves to the consciences of men—and also that such a manifestation of the truth is the proper and immediate end of preaching the gospel—I now proceed to apply this subject, in particular addresses, first to the pastor elect, then to the church and congregation in this place.

I. To the pastor elect.

My dear Sir,—Permit me to address you, on this solemn occasion, with fidelity, with plainness, and with that tenderness which is the natural effect of consanguinity and long friendship; and may I do it in the genuine exercise of christian brotherly love! You are now to be set apart to a very solemn and important work; the most solemn that can be undertaken in the world. Fidelity and honesty in this work, are peremptorily required of you. You have heard in what manner the apostles executed this work. They renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; did not walk in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commended themselves to every man's conscience, in the sight of God. *Go thou and do likewise.* Approve yourself honest and faithful, first in your personal concerns of a spiritual nature, and then in every part of your ministerial work.

In the first place, be honest, careful and vigilant in your own

spiritual concerns. The apostle argues, that if a minister neglect the moral concerns of his own house, he will also neglect those of the church. With equal truth may we argue, that if a man neglect the spiritual concerns of his own soul, he will neglect those of his flock, the people of his charge. Be careful therefore to *keep your own vineyard;* thus will you become the better prepared, to be *a keeper of the vineyards of your mother's children;* and without the former, you will in no measure be prepared for the latter. Take heed that you maintain a close *walk with God;* which primarily consists in an habitual sense of his existence, perfection, glory, constant presence with you, and observation of you in all your conduct, especially in your ministerial work; and in a sense of your own accountableness to him. Maintain a constant watch over your own spirit; "keep thy heart with all diligence, as out of it are the issues of life." Observe its affections, tempers, motives, and ends, both in your religious and your moral conduct. Be frequent and steady in your private devotions, and thus live near to God. Prayer is said to be the very breath of the christian; live by the use of this breath. Accustom yourself to the employment of the glorified saints, before you join them; thus will your conversation be in heaven, while you tabernacle in the flesh. Follow the example of the great apostle, in this respect, as well as others, "that without ceasing you make mention" of the people of your charge "always in your prayers." Be careful not only to keep a conscience void of offence towards God, but also towards men. Beware of the error into which too many run, who quiet their consciences, in a neglect of the duties of one table, on a pretence of extraordinary attention to those of the other. Cultivate a spirit of benevolence to all men, and even to your enemies; seeking their good, both spiritual and temporal. This is that love of our enemies, which is a peculiar duty of the gospel. Love, in its genuine exercises towards God and towards men, is the very spirit of the gospel, and the sum total of all that is required in it. So far as you have this spirit, you have received of the fulness of Christ, and grace for grace; and in imbibing and cultivating this spirit, you will reduce the gospel to practice, and exhibit an example to others of the truths and duties, which you inculcate on them in your preaching.

But this is not all; you are not only to be thus faithful in your private spiritual concerns, as a christian; but also in every part of your *ministerial work;* in your studies and researches after the truth—in communicating it to your people—in your common conduct.

First, be honest and faithful in your *researches after truth.*

This part of your work will require your utmost attention and all the time which you can spare from other necessary duties. The knowledge of the truth is absolutely necessary for a minister of the gospel. It cannot however be known in any competent degree, but by close and persevering study. The more you know it, the greater advantage will you have for doing good. It is endless, and can never be exhausted. The darkness or obscurity resting on the truth is very great; and every one, especially every minister of the gospel, is bound to exert himself to dispel the darkness and bring the truth to light. If every one were to exert himself to this end, doubtless great and rapid would be the increase of light and knowledge.

Improvement is by no means at an end; and those men err exceedingly, who lament that they live in this late period of the world, wherein improvement and science have been anticipated, and there is no room left for further discoveries. There is abundant room for discovery and improvement in every science, especially in theology. If all truth be already discovered, whence arises that endless variety of sentiments, and the extreme difficulty of settling controversies on theological subjects? These facts certainly prove, that all do not embrace the truth; and if some few are possessed of it in the general, yet of these few perhaps no two can be produced, who do not differ in their apprehensions and representations of some important doctrines. If therefore improvement in theology be at an end, it is brought to an end, not by a number of divines; for a number cannot be found, who agree among themselves; but it is brought to an end by some highly favored individual, who knows more than all the world beside. But who or where is this man? Will any one undertake to point him out, or pretend to be the man himself? Or can it be pretended concerning any man, that he knows the truth fully and perfectly? That he intermixes with it no error? That he is master of all, or of the best arguments in support of it; or of all the best answers to gainsayers? If not, it cannot be pretended that improvement is carried to its utmost pitch, even by any individual. As God is infinite, he is not, and cannot be perfectly known by men, or even by angels. They and the saints in glory are constantly studying and improving in knowledge. Theological subjects are the *things which they desire to look into.* They will carry on their improvements to eternity; yet will never have exhausted the truth. Much more is there room for the utmost improvements, which we can make in this life. For our encouragement, we may reflect, that every discovery of truth paves the way for still further discoveries.

Though the canon of scripture is complete, and we are to expect no further revelations; yet many new truths will break forth from the word of God, which although now contained in it, for want of attention and comparing spiritual things with spiritual, are not yet seen. Further discoveries even in moral and divine subjects, are also to be expected from the candid disquisitions of unbiassed reason. If ministers of the gospel would be faithful and diligent in their studies and researches after truth, there is not the least reason to doubt, but that great improvements would be the consequence; and instead of having occasion to lament, that we live at too late a period of the world, we might find matter of conviction, that we live at too early a period, to be under the best advantages to discover the truth. For the more truth there is already discovered, the greater is the advantage for still further discoveries.

With regard to you, dear sir, as I know you to be fond of science and improvement, and to prefer theology to all other sciences; let me beseech you to apply yourself vigorously, steadily and perseveringly to the study of this science. In this ample field let loose your whole genius, and employ your utmost abilities. Here is room enough, and objects sufficiently grand, various, entertaining and important. Suffer not yourself to be embarrassed with other business. That ministers in general are embarrassed with other business, is one chief cause and indeed is a necessary cause of their neglect of study; and of the little improvement made by them. For this embarrassment with other business, they plead necessity, arising from their scanty subsistence. But as you are much better provided for than most of us, you will not be able to avail yourself of this plea. Therefore let this people reap the proper fruits of the generous support they have given you; that they may never repent of what they have done in this matter. And let others see the beneficial consequences of this generosity, and be induced to imitate the example, that they also may derive the same advantages, from the like conduct.

It has been said, that ministers are the most indolent set of men in the world; that therefore there is no encouragement to give them a larger support; that they will only spend it in luxury, still neglecting their studies and other ministerial duties to as great a degree as ever; that as soon as they have acquired a habit of preaching, or preparing their sermons, they throw together something hastily and loosely, just so as to fill up the time of three quarters of an hour on the sabbath; and that this is the utmost object of their care or wishes; that hence there is a per-

petual, tasteless, and tiresome sameness in all their preaching; so that when you have heard two or three of their sermons, you have heard the whole that they ever preach, and can obtain no further instruction. By all means prevent this complaint as to yourself, or confute the charge by a constant diligence in your studies. Be not content with bare preparations for the sabbath; take care to prepare well; bring beaten oil into the sanctuary. Begin your preparations seasonably every week, that you may not be necessitated to hurry them over for want of time. Preach on a variety of subjects; on all the important subjects of the law and the gospel. These will afford a great variety indeed. If you *study*, your preaching will naturally comprehend a variety of subjects, and these handled in a manner proper to each subject. On the other hand, if you neglect your studies, it will as naturally run into the same track, as wheel-carriages on the high-way. The temptations to indolence in ministerial studies are such, that they are too powerful for many; let me forewarn you, that unless you summon up your utmost resolution, there will be danger, that they will be too powerful for you.

We who are employed in the ministry have not all the same motives to industry, as men of other professions, who make gains in proportion as they exert themselves in their business. Whereas a minister's salary is fixed, and if he perform his work barely in such a manner as to be on good terms with his people, his support is the same as if he were ever so laborious or industrious. Yet there are other motives sufficient to excite us to industry, and those such as ought to influence us much more, than the prospect of gain. I mean the considerations of improvement in divine knowledge and grace; of diffusing the truths of the gospel; of being instrumental in the salvation of immortal souls; and of glorifying our heavenly Father. Let these have their full weight on you, dear sir, and prosecute your whole work under the impression of them.

Over and above your preparations for the sabbath, take care to be constantly increasing your stock of knowledge, by reading, by reflection, by conversation, and by epistolary correspondence on the most important subjects, with men of thought and literature. This last mentioned source of improvement, though generally neglected, certainly promises a great increase of knowledge. In this way you may possess yourself, in a very short space of time, of the knowledge which has cost others, perhaps years of reading and reflection.

In the prosecution of your studies, attend to all subjects; not to all equally, but to every one according to its importance and

usefulness. Decline not proper attention to any subject, because it is unpopular. However unpopular, it may be a most important and essential truth. Nay, from the very depravity of the human heart, we may expect, that the most excellent truths of the gospel will be unpopular. Decline not proper attention to any subject, because it is abstruse or hard to be understood. Everything at present unknown, so far as it is unknown, is necessarily hard to be understood. So that if you study nothing which is abstruse, you will study nothing but what you perfectly know; and surely you need not study that, because you know it already. The favorite maxim of some, to study plain subjects only, will most directly put an end to all study and all improvement.

In order to such a prosecution of your studies as I have now recommended, it is necessary that you be very careful to waste no part of your time. And let me recommend to you method in your studies, and in the employment of your time. The advantages of this are great and manifold.

Again; be honest and faithful in *communicating* the truth to the people of your charge. There are three ways in which you will be called to communicate the truth—preaching—conversation—and discipline.

Be honest and faithful in *preaching* the truth. Preach to the consciences of your hearers. Deliver not mere moral harangues, calculated only to please the ear, to afford entertainment for three quarters of an hour, or to flatter the pride of your hearers, their inordinate self-love, or their other principles of depravity. Let your sermons be fraught with the very essence of the law and of the gospel. Hold forth to your hearers their relation to God, and the duties resulting from that relation; their state by nature, and what their state must be by grace. Point out to them the consequence of continuing in a state of nature, and of entering on a state of grace. Thus preach both the terrors of the law, and the consolations of the gospel. Bear full testimony to the truth; declare all the counsel of God; keep back nothing that can be profitable to your hearers. Declare it plainly, and without intermixture of error. Declare it however unpopular it may be. You are to expect, as I have already observed, that it will be unpopular, since it is opposed to the carnal hearts of mankind; since it condemns them to eternal death, and cuts off all their false hopes of future felicity. The gospel faithfully preached *takes away the gods of natural men*, and *what have they more?* Therefore you must expect to be opposed, for the same reason that men oppose a robber who would deprive them of their property, or an assassin, who would stab them to the heart. Yet forbear not on

that account *to declare all the counsel of God.* Declare it, *whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.* Thus you will at least *deliver your own soul.* And the best defence against opposition, is to commend yourself to the consciences of your hearers. So far as you shall do this, they will not dare to oppose you.

Exhibit the truth honestly in *private conversation*, as well as in preaching. Besides visiting the sick, visit your people in general, as you may have opportunity, and cheerfully receive visits from them; not merely for ceremony, or for common civility and friendship; but especially for religious conversation and improvement. Free conversation on religious subjects is by no means to be omitted. This mode of communicating the truth hath many advantages above preaching. It is more free and familiar; it gives opportunity to state and clear up doubts and objections; to enter into the particular feelings of those with whom you converse; and to adapt your discourse to their several capacities. Seize these advantages and use them to the best purposes. Adapt your conversation to the respective cases of your people; to their security, their conviction, their sanctification, their darkness, their joy, their despondence, their hopes. Converse with young people, and even with children, concerning their spiritual interests. The prospect of benefiting them by such conversation is commonly more promising, than of benefiting those of more advanced age; and they are the hope of the flock.

Take heed that you never flatter. This will often be the object of the wishes of those with whom you converse, whether sick or well. They will wish to be comforted, when there is no ground for comfort; especially when death approaches; and surrounding friends may join their importunity to the wishes of the dying man. The temptation to comfort in this case, even without foundation, will be exceedingly strong. Beware that you be not carried away with it. *Sew pillows under the arm-holes of none; never daub with untempered mortar.*

Christian *discipline* is another mode of exhibiting the truth, and though in itself disagreeable, is of divine institution, and is absolutely enjoined. What are the several steps of admonition, confession and excommunication, but so many different exhibitions of the truth? Honesty and fidelity are equally necessary in this part of your work, as in any other; and the temptation, to a violation of those virtues are equally great and powerful, if not more so. It will therefore be necessary, that you "*set your face like a flint,*" in order to withstand those temptations, and the opposition, that you must expect to meet with in this affair.

Finally, be honest and faithful in your *common conduct.* The scarcity of really honest men, has been long since observed and lamented by the wise man, in that interrogation, *A faithful man who can find?* The virtues of honesty, justice and fidelity are in these degenerate days almost extinguished, at least from this part of the earth. Now you are called to be an example to this flock, of these and all other virtues. Let it be known that the church in *Greenfield* has a really honest minister. Strangely inconsistent indeed is the character of the man, who is honest in ministerial duties and services, but not in his common conduct. Such a character however may exist, though it is to be presumed but rarely; more rarely than the opposite character of one, who is honest and faithful in the common affairs of life, but not in ministerial services.

For motives to such extensive honesty, let me suggest, in the *first* place, That otherwise you are of course guilty of fraud. There is no medium between these two. And to defraud your people in your ministerial labors, is much worse, than to defraud them of their property. They may lose their property, and yet be happy, at least in the future world. But to defraud them in your ministerial labors, may be the occasion of their eternal ruin. If therefore you should wrong them out of thousands of their property, however abominable the crime would be, it might be a less injury to them, than if you should wrong them in your ministerial work.

The good you may do to mankind, and particularly to the kingdom of God in the world, is *another* powerful motive, to excite you to fidelity. What consideration can be more gratifying to a benevolent mind, than that of doing good to mankind, contributing to their eternal salvation, and giving glory to God by promoting the interests and ends of his kingdom, constituted on the principles of the most noble and general benevolence? By a faithful discharge of your duty, you may save the souls of many, which being plucked as brands out of the fire, and made the heirs of eternal happiness, will be trophies of your victorious fidelity.

The consequences to yourself, on the one hand and on the other, are presented to you, as *additional* motives to fidelity in your work. You are set as a watchman to this people; you are to warn them of their danger, and of every threatening foe. If you do not warn them according to truth, their blood will be required at your hands. But if you do faithfully warn them, though they die in their sins, yet you shall have delivered your soul. Nay, you shall not merely have delivered your soul, so as at last to stand in your lot; but you shall receive the rewards of a faith-

ful servant. Having been faithful over a few things, you shall be made ruler over many things, and shall enter into the joy of your Lord.

II. It is now time, that I turn the address to the church and society in this place.

MEN, BRETHREN, AND FATHERS,—We congratulate you on the events of this day. You are now to have a minister set over you in the order of the gospel. We congratulate you on your general and firm union in this affair; on your apparent just sense of the worth and importance of the stated ministration of the divine word and ordinances among you; on your readiness to support the ministry and your willingness to expend of your worldly substance for this end. By your former punctuality in fulfilling your ministerial contracts, it appears, you are not only forward to say, but also to do. It is common for the preacher on such occasions as the present, to press the duty of supporting the ministry. But your liberal engagements in the present instance, and your former punctuality in fulfilling your engagements, forbid me to say a word on that head. Only persist in the same line of conduct which you have hitherto pursued, and you will acquire honor to yourselves, will be examples to others, and will put it out of the power of your minister to plead necessity of applying himself to secular business, in the neglect of his ministerial work.

Permit me, to turn your attention to other matters. You have heard what has been said to your pastor elect. What think you of it? Do you not wish that he may be truly honest and faithful, and that in all the forementioned respects? Do you not wish that he may forever renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walk in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully; but that by manifestation of the truth he may commend himself to the conscience of every one of you in the sight of God? Without waiting for your answer, I presume it would be in the affirmative. Then oppose not his honesty; encourage it; do nothing to discourage it. When he tells you the truth, as to doctrines, as to discipline, as to practice; when he lays open the human heart, exhibits your native depravity, your state of ruin in yourselves, your inability to recover yourselves, your dependence on God and his grace; and yet holds forth your obligation to comply with the whole law and the whole gospel; your obligation to repent, to do no more so wickedly, to be reconciled to God through Christ; when he informs you, that you must have an interest in Christ, and that all your righteousnesses, in the matter of justification, are but as filthy rags; that notwithstanding them, God has a right forever to cast you off; that you entirely deserve

it; when he presses upon you particular duties, as the duty of prayer in the closet and in the family, or the duty of divine public worship; or the duties of justice, fidelity and beneficence to men; when he points out to you the contrary sins and sets them in their proper glaring colors; when in any of these instances he commends himself in such a manner to your consciences, that with a painful sense of guilt, you are obliged to assent to the truth; yet be not angry with him for these things; remember that herein, he is acting the part of an honest and faithful minister. Although these exhibitions of truth are painful, yet submit to them, be patient under them; they are necessary; your wound must be probed to the bottom; this is for your good; it is conducive to your healing. Therefore oppose not the necessary operation. Surely you would not choose that your diseases should be healed slightly. You cannot choose that your minister should preach to you flatteries and lies, or any smooth things which are contrary to the truth, saying peace, peace, when there is no peace for you.

Possibly some of you, who are now much pleased with the pastor elect; when you shall have understood him more thoroughly; when you shall have seen how his preaching condemns you, restrains you in the indulgence of your favorite appetites, your avarice, your sensuality, your inordinate self-love, and other sinful biases; and how it cuts off all your fond but groundless hopes of future peace and safety; will then be highly disgusted, and of friends become bitter enemies. If this shall be the case in any instances; remember that I now forewarn you of it. And also remember, how unkind, how inconsistent it is to desire an honest minister, and then to persecute him because he is honest! because he honestly tells you the truth!

If it is the duty of your pastor to preach the truth faithfully; it is equally your duty to receive it, to hear it attentively, to acquiesce in it, to obey it.

You are now settling a minister of the gospel, in order that you may become christians and be edified in the most holy faith. But neither of these is possible, unless at the same time you are honest men. It is not only necessary that your minister in his character be honest, but that you also be honest, honest to God, to your own souls, and to your fellow men. In the first place render unto God, the things that are God's. Render him your hearts, in a sincere and supreme love, and a cordial faith in his Son Jesus Christ. This temper of course will express itself in all outward obedience. Again, render unto men, the things that are theirs. The tendency of real religion is to make men in

every respect better; not only better with regard to God and his worship, but better with regard to one another; more kind and beneficent; more tender hearted and obliging; better neighbors; better husbands and wives; better parents and children; better in all relations; and of course more honest and faithful. As it is opposed to all sin, it cannot but be opposed to the sin of injustice or dishonesty. It requires us to provide things honest in the sight of all men; to render unto all their dues; to owe no man anything, but love.

This virtue is indeed neglected by some who pretend to be the subjects of true religion. They will pray abundantly, attend all meetings for social worship, both in season and out of season; talk of religion without end; profess in the most ostentatious manner, love to God, and all other religious affections. For thus to pray, talk and profess, is easy and cheap. But to practise honesty, often costs solid substance. For this reason they live in the neglect of it. But in vain will you pretend to real religion, without the manifest effects of it in an honest life. Without an honest life you are no christians; without this, you can never reach the heavenly state. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?"

It is a charge commonly brought against professors of christianity, that they are no more honest, and in many instances less honest, than other men. This is a scandalous charge; and if it be true, professors are a scandalous set of men. Let this never be true of any of you who are members of the church in this place. Walk worthy of the holy vocation with which you are called, as in other respects, so in practising universal honesty.

Nor is it enough that you yourselves practise honesty, and suffer your minister to do the same. You are bound positively to encourage and assist him. He will need your assistance particularly in the discipline of the church. In this difficult affair you ought not to throw the whole burden on him. You ought as far as may be, to relieve him, to vindicate him in the discharge of his duty, and to take the burden on yourselves. Especially are you constantly to *pray* for him. Even the great apostle Paul, in his epistles repeatedly desires those to whom he wrote, to pray for him and the other apostles; "brethren pray for us," is an expression familiar to him. Therefore in all your approaches to the throne of grace, remember your minister.

"And now, brethren, we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." May you have peace and be edified. May you long enjoy the pastor who

is now to be set over you in the Lord. May he be a burning and a shining light, and may you continue to rejoice in his light. May this church ever approve itself to be a true church of our Lord Jesus Christ, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. May every one of your souls be a temple of the Holy Ghost, in which God shall dwell and walk; till you all shall come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And may Christ sanctify and cleanse this church, with the washing of water, by the word, that he may present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

SERMON V.

THE INJUSTICE AND IMPOLICY OF THE SLAVE TRADE, AND OF SLAVERY.*

MATTHEW 7: 12.—*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would, that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.*

THIS precept of our divine Lord hath always been admired as most excellent; and doubtless with the greatest reason. Yet it needs some explanation. It is not surely to be understood in the most unlimited sense, implying that because a prince expects and wishes for obedience from his subjects, he is obliged to obey them; that because parents wish their children to submit to their government, therefore they are to submit to the government of their children; or that because some men wish that others would concur and assist them to the gratification of their unlawful desires, therefore they also are to gratify the unlawful desires of others. But whatever we are conscious that we should, in an exchange of circumstances, wish, and are persuaded that we might reasonably wish, that others would do to us; that we are bound to do to them. This is the general rule given us in the text; and a very extensive rule it is, reaching to all our actions; and is particularly useful to direct our conduct toward inferiors, and those whom we have in our power. I have therefore thought it a proper foundation for the discourse, which by *the Society for the promotion of Freedom, and for the Relief of Persons unlawfully holden in Bondage*, I have the honor to be appointed to deliver, on the present occasion.

This divine maxim is most properly applicable to the slave trade, and to the slavery of the Africans. Let us then make the application.

Should we be willing, that the Africans or any other nation should purchase us, our wives and children, transport us into Africa and there sell us into perpetual and absolute slavery?

* Preached before the Connecticut Society for the promotion of Freedom, and for the Relief of Persons unlawfully holden in Bondage, at their Annual Meeting in New-Haven, Sept. 15, 1791, and published by request.

Should we be willing, that they by large bribes and offers of a gainful traffic should entice our neighbors to kidnap and sell us to them, and that they should hold in perpetual and cruel bondage, not only ourselves, but our posterity through all generations? Yet why is it not as right for them to treat us in this manner, as it is for us to treat them in the same manner? Their color indeed is different from ours. But does this give us a right to enslave them? The nations from Germany to Guinea have complexions of every shade from the fairest white to a jetty black; and if a black complexion subject a nation or an individual to slavery, where shall slavery begin, or where shall it end?

I propose to mention a few reasons against the right of the slave trade—and then to consider the principal arguments, which I have ever heard urged in favor of it. What will be said against the slave trade will generally be equally applicable to slavery itself; and if conclusive against the former, will be equally so against the latter.

As to the slave trade, I conceive it to be unjust in itself—abominable on account of the cruel manner in which it is conducted—and totally wrong on account of the impolicy of it, or its destructive tendency to the moral and political interests of any country.

I. *It is unjust in itself.*

It is unjust in the same sense, and for the same reason, that it is, to steal, to rob, or to murder. It is a principle, the truth of which hath in this country been generally, if not universally acknowledged, ever since the commencement of the late war, ***that all men are born equally free.*** If this be true, the Africans are by nature equally entitled to freedom as we are; and therefore we have no more right to enslave, or to afford aid to enslave them, than they have to do the same to us. They have the same right to their freedom, which they have to their property or to their lives. Therefore to enslave them is as really and in the same sense wrong, as to steal from them, or to rob or murder them.

There are indeed cases in which men may justly be deprived of their liberty and reduced to slavery, as there are cases in which they may be justly deprived of their lives. But they can justly be deprived of neither, unless they have by their own voluntary conduct forfeited it. Therefore still the right to liberty stands on the same basis with the right to life. And that the Africans have done something whereby they have forfeited their liberty must appear, before we can justly deprive them of it; as it must appear, that they have done something whereby they have forfeited their lives, before we may justly deprive them of these.

II. *The slave trade is wicked and abominable on account of the cruel manner in which it is carried on.*

Beside the stealing or kidnapping of men, women and children, in the first instance, and the instigation of others to this abominable practice; the inhuman manner in which they are transported to America, and in which they are treated on their passage and in their subsequent slavery, is such as ought forever to deter every man from acting any part in this business, who has any regard to justice or humanity. They are crowded so closely into the holds and between the decks of vessels, that they have scarcely room to lie down, and sometimes not room to sit up in an erect posture; the men at the same time fastened together with irons by two and two; and all this in the most sultry climate. The consequence of the whole is, that the most dangerous and fatal diseases are soon bred among them, whereby vast numbers of those exported from Africa perish in the voyage; while others in dread of that slavery which is before them, and in distress and despair from the loss of their parents, their children, their husbands, their wives, all their dear connections, and their dear native country itself, starve themselves to death or plunge themselves into the ocean. Those who attempt in the former of those ways to escape from their persecutors, are tortured by live coals applied to their mouths. Those who attempt an escape in the latter and fail, are equally tortured by the most cruel beating, or otherwise as their persecutors please. If any of them make an attempt, as they sometimes do, to recover their liberty, some, and as the circumstances may be, many, are put to immediate death. Others beaten, bruised, cut and mangled in a most inhuman and shocking manner, are in this situation exhibited to the rest, to terrify them from the like attempt in future; and some are delivered up to every species of torment, whether by the application of the whip, or of any other instrument, even of fire itself, as the ingenuity of the ship-master and of his crew is able to suggest or their situation will admit; and these torments are purposely continued for several days, before death is permitted to afford relief to these objects of vengeance.*

By these means, according to the common computation, twenty-five thousand, which is a fourth part of those who are exported from Africa, and by the concession of all, twenty thousand, annually perish, before they arrive at the places of their destination in America.

* If any doubt these statements, they are requested to peruse Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the slave trade. This trade is at present carried on in all its horrors.

But this is by no means the end of the sufferings of this unhappy people. Bred up in a country spontaneously yielding the necessaries and conveniences of savage life, they have never been accustomed to labor; of course they are but ill prepared to go through the fatigue and drudgery to which they are doomed in their state of slavery. Therefore partly by this cause, partly by the scantiness and badness of their food, and partly from dejection of spirits, mortification and despair, another twenty-five thousand die in the seasoning, as it is called, i. e. within two years after their arrival in America. This I say is the common computation. Or if we will in this particular be as favorable to the trade as in the estimate of the number which perishes on the passage, we may reckon the number which dies in the seasoning to be twenty thousand. So that of the hundred thousand annually exported from Africa to America, fifty thousand, as it is commonly computed, or on the most favorable estimate, forty thousand, die before they are seasoned to the country.

Nor is this all. The cruel sufferings of these pitiable beings are not yet at an end. Thenceforward they have to drag out a miserable life in absolute slavery, entirely at the disposal of their masters, by whom not only every venial fault, every mere inadvertence or mistake, but even real virtues, are liable to be construed into the most atrocious crimes, and punished as such, according to their caprice or rage, while they are intoxicated sometimes with strong drink, sometimes with passion.

By these masters they are supplied with barely enough to keep them from starving, as the whole expense laid out on a slave for food, clothing and medicine is commonly computed on an average at thirty shillings sterling annually. At the same time they are kept at hard labor from five o'clock in the morning, till nine at night, excepting time to eat twice during the day. And they are constantly under the watchful eye of overseers and negro-drivers more tyrannical and cruel than even their masters themselves. From these drivers, for every imagined, as well as real neglect or want of exertion, they receive the lash, the smack of which is all day long in the ears of those who are on the plantation or in the vicinity; and it is used with such dexterity and severity, as not only to lacerate the skin, but to tear out small portions of the flesh at almost every stroke.

This is the general treatment of the slaves.* But many individuals suffer still more severely. Many are knocked down; some

* This declaration is not at the present time true; at least as respects our own country. Instances of cruelty, undoubtedly, do occur, but it is believed receive no countenance from public opinion.—Ed.

have their eyes beaten out; some have an arm or a leg broken, or chopped off; and many for a very small or for no crime at all, have been beaten to death merely to gratify the fury of an enraged master or overseer.

Nor ought we on this occasion to overlook the wars among the nations of Africa excited by the trade, or the destruction attendant on those wars. Not to mention the destruction of property, the burning of towns and villages, etc. it has been determined by reasonable computation, that there are annually exported from Africa to the various parts of America, one hundred thousand slaves, as was before observed; that of these, six thousand are captives of war; that in the wars in which these are taken, ten persons of the victors and vanquished are killed, to one taken; that therefore the taking of the six thousand captives is attended with the slaughter of sixty thousand of their countrymen. Now does not justice, does not humanity shrink from the idea, that in order to procure one slave to gratify our avarice, we should put to death ten human beings? Or that in order to increase our property, and that only in some small degree, we should carry on a trade, or even connive at it, to support which sixty thousand of our own species are slain in war?

These sixty thousand, added to the forty thousand who perish on the passage and in the seasoning, gives us an hundred thousand who are annually destroyed by the trade; and the whole advantage gained by this amazing destruction of human lives is sixty thousand slaves. For you will recollect, that the whole number exported from Africa is an hundred thousand; that of these forty thousand die on the passage and in the seasoning, and sixty thousand are destroyed in the wars. Therefore while one hundred and sixty thousand are killed in the wars and are exported from Africa, but sixty thousand are added to the stock of slaves.

Now when we consider all this; when we consider the miseries which this unhappy people suffer in their wars, in their captivity, in their voyage to America, and during a wretched life of cruel slavery; and especially when we consider the annual destruction of an hundred thousand lives in the manner before mentioned; who can hesitate to declare this trade and the consequent slavery to be contrary to every principle of justice and humanity, of the law of nature and of the law of God.

III. *This trade and this slavery are utterly wrong on the ground of their impolicy. In a variety of respects they are exceedingly hurtful to the state which tolerates them.*

1. They are hurtful, as they *deprave the morals* of the people.

The incessant and inhuman cruelties practised in the trade and in the subsequent slavery, necessarily tend to harden the human heart against the tender feelings of humanity in the masters of vessels, in the sailors, in the factors, in the proprietors of the slaves, in their children, in the overseers, in the slaves themselves, and in all who habitually see those cruelties. Now the eradication or even the diminution of compassion, tenderness and humanity, is certainly a great depravation of heart, and must be followed with correspondent depravity of manners. And measures which lead to such depravity of heart and manners, cannot but be extremely hurtful to the state, and consequently are extremely impolitic.

2. The trade is impolitic as it is so *destructive of the lives of seamen.* The ingenious Mr. Clarkson hath in a very satisfactory manner made it appear, that in the slave trade alone Great Britain loses annually about nineteen hundred seamen; and that this loss is more than double the loss annually sustained by that country in all her other trade taken together. And doubtless we lose as many as Great Britain in proportion to the number of seamen whom we employ in this trade. Now can it be politic to carry on a trade which is so destructive of that useful part of our citizens, our seamen?

3. African slavery is exceedingly impolitic, as it *discourages industry.* Nothing is more essential to the political prosperity of any state, than industry in the citizens. But in proportion as slaves are multiplied, every kind of labor becomes ignominious; and in fact, in those of the United States, in which slaves are the most numerous, gentlemen and ladies of any fashion disdain to employ themselves in business, which in other states is consistent with the dignity of the first families and first offices. In a country filled with negro slaves, labor belongs to them only, and a white man is despised in proportion as he applies to it. Now how destructive to industry in all of the lowest and middle class of citizens, such a situation and the prevalence of such ideas will be, you can easily conceive. The consequence is, that some will nearly starve, others will betake themselves to the most dishonest practices, to obtain the means of living.

As slavery produces indolence in the white people, so it produces all those vices which are naturally connected with it; such as intemperance, lewdness and prodigality. These vices enfeeble both the body and the mind, and unfit men for any vigorous exertions and employments either external or mental. And those who are unfit for such exertions, are already a very degenerate race; degenerate, not only in a moral, but a natural sense.

They are contemptible too, and will soon be despised even by their negroes themselves.

Slavery tends to lewdness not only as it produces indolence, but as it affords abundant opportunity for that wickedness without either the danger and difficulty of an attack on the virtue of a woman of chastity, or of the danger of a connection with one of ill fame. And we learn the too frequent influence and effect of such a situation, not only from common fame, but from the multitude of mulattoes in countries where slaves are very numerous.

Slavery has a most direct tendency to haughtiness also, and a domineering spirit and conduct in the proprietors of the slaves, in their children, and in all who have the control of them. A man who has been bred up in domineering over negroes, can scarcely avoid contracting such a habit of haughtiness and domination, as will express itself in his general treatment of mankind, whether in his private capacity, or in any office civil or military with which he may be vested. Despotism in economics naturally leads to despotism in politics, and domestic slavery in a free government is a perfect solecism in human affairs.

How baneful all these tendencies and effects of slavery must be to the public good, and especially to the public good of such a free country as ours, I need not inform you.

4. In the same proportion as industry and labor are discouraged, is population *discouraged and prevented.* This is another respect in which slavery is exceedingly impolitic. That population is prevented in proportion as industry is discouraged, is, I conceive, so plain that nothing needs to be said to illustrate it. Mankind in general will enter into matrimony as soon as they possess the means of supporting a family. But the great body of any people have no other way of supporting themselves or a family, than by their own labor. Of course as labor is discouraged, matrimony is discouraged and population is prevented. But the impolicy of whatever produces these effects will be acknowledged by all. The wealth, strength and glory of a state depend on the number of its virtuous citizens; and a state without citizens is at least as great an absurdity, as a king without subjects.

5. The impolicy of slavery still further appears from this, that *it weakens the state*, and in proportion to the degree in which it exists, *exposes it to become an easy conquest.* The increase of free citizens is an increase of the strength of the state. But not so with regard to the increase of slaves. They not only add nothing to the strength of the state, but actually diminish it in proportion to their number. Every slave is naturally an enemy to

the state in which he is holden in slavery, and wants nothing but an opportunity to assist in its overthrow. And an enemy within a state, is much more dangerous than one without it.

These observations concerning the prevention of population and weakening the state, are supported by facts which have fallen within our own observation. That the southern states, in which slaves are so numerous, are in no measure so populous, according to the extent of territory, as the northern, is a fact of universal notoriety; and that during the late war, the southern states found themselves greatly weakened by their slaves, and therefore were so easily overrun by the British army, is equally notorious.

From the view we have now taken of this subject, we scruple not to infer, that to carry on the slave trade and to introduce slaves into our country, is not only to be guilty of injustice, robbery and cruelty toward our fellow men; but it is to injure ourselves and our country; and therefore it is altogether unjustifiable, wicked and abominable.

Having thus considered the injustice and ruinous tendency of the slave trade, I proceed to attend to the principal arguments urged in favor of it.

1. It is said that the Africans are the posterity of Ham, the son Noah; that Canaan one of Ham's sons, was cursed by Noah to be a servant of servants; that by Canaan we are to understand Ham's posterity in general; that as his posterity are devoted by God to slavery, we have a right to enslave them. This is the argument; to which I answer:

It is indeed generally thought that Ham peopled Africa; but that the curse on Canaan extended to all the posterity of Ham is a mere imagination. The only reason given for it is, that Canaan was only one of Ham's sons; and that it seems reasonable, that the curse of Ham's conduct should fall on all his posterity, if on any. But this argument is insufficient. We might as clearly argue, that the judgments denounced on the house of David, on account of his sin in the matter of Uriah, must equally fall on all his posterity. Yet we know, that many of them lived and died in great prosperity. So in every case in which judgments are predicted concerning any nation or family.

It is allowed in this argument, that the curse was to fall on the *posterity* of Ham, and not immediately on Ham himself; if otherwise, it is nothing to the purpose of the slave trade, or of any slaves now in existence. It being allowed then, that this curse was to fall on Ham's posterity, he who had a right to curse the whole of that posterity, had the same right to curse a part of

it only, and the posterity of Canaan equally as any other part; and a curse on Ham's posterity in the line of Canaan was as real a curse on Ham himself, as a curse on all his posterity would have been.

Therefore we have no ground to believe, that this curse respected any others, than the posterity of Canaan, who lived in the land of Canaan, which is well known to be remote from Africa. We have a particular account, that all the sons of Canaan settled in the land of Canaan; as may be seen in Gen. 10: 15—20, "And Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Emorite, and the Girgasite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite; and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lashah." Nor have we account that any of their posterity except the Carthaginians afterward removed to any part of Africa; and none will pretend that these peopled Africa in general; especially considering, that they were subdued, destroyed and so far extirpated by the Romans.

This curse then of the posterity of Canaan, had no reference to the inhabitants of Guinea, or of Africa in general; but was fulfilled partly in Joshua's time, in the reduction and servitude of the Canaanites, and especially of the Gibeonites; partly by what the Phenicians suffered from the Chaldeans, Persians and Greeks; and finally by what the Carthaginians suffered from the Romans.

Therefore this curse gives us no right to enslave the Africans, as we do by the slave trade, because it has no respect to the Africans whom we enslave. Nor if it had respected them, would it have given any such right; because it was not an institution of slavery, but a mere prophecy of it. And from this prophecy we have no more ground to infer the right of slavery, than we have from the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, or by the Romans, to infer their right respectively to destroy it in the manner they did; or from other prophecies to infer the right of Judas to betray his master, or of the Jews to crucify him.

2. The right of slavery is inferred from the instance of Abraham, who had servants born in his house and bought with his money. But it is by no means certain, that these were slaves, as our negroes are. If they were, it is unaccountable, that he went out at the head of an army of them to fight his enemies. No West-India planter would easily be induced to venture himself in such a situation. It is far more probable, that similar to some of

the vassals under the feudal constitution, the servants of Abraham were only in a good measure dependent on him, and protected by him. But if they were to all intents and purposes slaves, Abraham's holding of them will no more prove the right of slavery, than his going in to Hagar, will prove it right for any man to indulge in criminal intercourse with his domestic.

3. From the divine permission given the Israelites to buy servants of the nations round about them, it is argued, that we have a right to buy the Africans and hold them in slavery. See Lev. 25: 44—47, "Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families, that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever; but over your brethren the children of Israel ye shall not rule one over another with rigor." But if this be at all to the purpose, it is a permission to every nation under heaven to buy slaves of the nations round about them; to us, to buy of our Indian neighbors; to them, to buy of us; to the French, to buy of the English, and to the English to buy of the French; and so through the world. If then this argument be valid, every man has an entire right to engage in this trade, and to buy and sell any other man of another nation, and any other man of another nation has an entire right to buy and sell him. Thus according to this construction, we have in Lev. 25: 43, etc. an institution of a universal slave trade, by which every man may not only become a merchant, but may rightfully become the merchandise itself of this trade, and may be bought and sold like a beast. Now this consequence will be given up as absurd, and therefore also the construction of scripture from which it follows, must be given up. Yet it is presumed, that there is no avoiding that construction or the absurdity flowing from it, but by admitting, that this permission to the Israelites to buy slaves has no respect to us, but was in the same manner peculiar to them, as the permission and command to subdue, destroy and extirpate the whole Canaanitish nation; and therefore no more gives countenance to African slavery, than the command to extirpate the Canaanites, gives countenance to the extirpation of any nation in these days, by a universal slaughter of men and women, young men and maidens, infants and sucklings.

(4) It is further pleaded, that there were slaves in the times of the apostles; that they did not forbid the holding of those

slaves, but gave directions to servants, doubtless referring to the servants of that day, to obey *their masters*, and *count them worthy of all honor*.

To this the answer is, that the apostles teach the general duties of servants who are righteously in the state of servitude, as many are or may be, by hire, by indenture, and by judgment of a civil court. But they do not say, whether the servants in general of that day were justly holden in slavery or not. In like manner they lay down the general rules of obedience to civil magistrates, without deciding concerning the characters of the magistrates of the Roman empire in the reign of Nero. And as the apostle Paul requires masters *to give their servants that which is just and equal* (Col. 4 : 1), so if any were enslaved unjustly, of course he in this text requires of the masters of such, to give them their freedom. Thus the apostles treat the slavery of that day in the same manner that they treat the civil government; and say nothing more in favor of the former, than they say in favor of the latter.

Besides, this argument from the slavery prevailing in the days of the apostles, if it prove anything, proves too much, and so confutes itself. It proves, that we may enslave all captives taken in war, of any nation, and in any the most unjust war, such as the wars of the Romans, which were generally undertaken from the motives of ambition or avarice. On the ground of this argument we had a right to enslave the prisoners, whom we, during the late war, took from the British army; and they had the same right to enslave those whom they took from us; and so with respect to all other nations.

5. It is strongly urged, that the negroes brought from Africa are all captives of war, and therefore are justly bought and holden in slavery. This is a principal argument always urged by the advocates for slavery; and in a solemn debate on this subject, it hath been strongly insisted on, very lately in the British parliament. Therefore it requires our particular attention.

Captives in a war just on their part, cannot be justly enslaved; nor is this pretended. Therefore the captives who may be justly enslaved, must be taken in a war unjust on their part. But even on the supposition, that captives in such a war may be justly enslaved, it will not follow, that we can justly carry on the slave trade, as it is commonly carried on from the African coast. In this trade any slaves are purchased, who are offered for sale whether justly or unjustly enslaved. No inquiry is made whether they were captives in any war; much less, whether they were captivated in a war unjust on their part.

By the most authentic accounts, it appears, that the wars in general in Africa are excited by the prospect of gain from the sale of the captives of the war. Therefore those taken by the assailants in such wars, cannot be justly enslaved. Beside these, many are kidnapped by those of the neighboring nations; some by their own neighbors; and some by their king or his agents; others for debt or some trifling crime are condemned to perpetual slavery. But none of these are justly enslaved. And the traders make no inquiry concerning the mode or occasion of their first enslavement. They buy all that are offered, provided they like them and the price. So that the plea, that the African slaves are captives in war, is entirely insufficient to justify the slave trade as now carried on.

But this is not all; if it were ever so true, that all the negroes exported from Africa were captives in war, and that they were taken in a war unjust on their part; still they could not be justly enslaved. We have no right to enslave a private foe in a state of nature, after he is conquered. Suppose in a state of nature one man rises against another and endeavors to kill him; in this case the person assaulted has no right to kill the assailant, unless it be necessary to preserve his own life. But in wars between nations, one nation may no doubt secure itself against another, by other means than the slavery of its captives. If a nation be victorious in the war, it may exact some towns or a district of country, by way of caution; or it may impose a fine to deter from future injuries. If the nation be not victorious, it will do no good to enslave the captives whom it has taken. It will provoke the victors, and foolishly excite vengeance which cannot be repelled.

Or if neither nation be decidedly victorious, to enslave the captives on either side can answer no good purpose, but must at least occasion the enslaving of the citizens of the other nation, who are now, or in future may be in a state of captivity. Such a practice therefore necessarily tends to evil and not good.

Besides; captives in war are generally common soldiers or common citizens; and they are generally ignorant of the true cause or causes of the war, and are by their superiors made to believe, that the war is entirely just on their part. Or if this be not the case, they may by force be compelled to serve in a war which they know to be unjust. In either of these cases they do not deserve to be condemned to perpetual slavery. To inflict perpetual slavery on these private soldiers and citizens is manifestly not to do, as we would wish that men should do to us. If we were taken in a war unjust on our part, we should not think it right to be condemned to perpetual slavery. No more right is it for us

to condemn and hold in perpetual slavery others, who are in the same situation.

6. It is argued, that as the Africans in their own country, previously to the purchase of them by the African traders, are captives in war; if they were not bought up by those traders, they would be put to death; that therefore to purchase them and to subject them to slavery instead of death, is an act of mercy not only lawful, but meritorious.

If the case were indeed so as is now represented, the purchase of the negroes would be no more meritorious, than the act of a man, who, if we were taken by the Algerines, should purchase us out of that slavery. This would indeed be an act of benevolence, if the purchaser should set us at liberty. But it is no act of benevolence to buy a man out of one state into another no better. Nay, the act of ransoming a man from death gives no right to the ransomer to commit a crime or an act of injustice to the person ransomed. The person ransomed is doubtless obligated according to his ability to satisfy the ransomer for his expense and trouble. Yet the ransomer has no more right to enslave the other, than the man who saves the life of another who was about to be killed by a robber or an assassin, has a right to enslave him. The liberty of a man for life is a far greater good, than the property paid for a negro on the African coast. And to deprive a man of an immensely greater good, in order to recover one immensely less, is an immense injury and crime.

7. As to the pretence, that to prohibit or lay aside this trade, would be hurtful to our commerce; it is sufficient to ask, whether on the supposition, that it were advantageous to the commerce of Great Britain to send her ships to these states, and transport us into perpetual slavery in the West Indies, it would be right that she should go into that trade.

8. That to prohibit the slave trade would infringe on the property of those, who have expended large sums to carry on that trade, or of those who wish to purchase the slaves for their plantations, hath also been urged as an argument in favor of the trade. But the same argument would prove, that if the skins and teeth of the negroes were as valuable articles of commerce as furs and elephant's teeth, and a merchant were to lay out his property in this commerce, he ought by no means to be obstructed therein.

9. But others will carry on the trade, if we do not. So others will rob, steal and murder, if we do not.

10. It is said, that some men are intended by nature to be slaves. If this mean, that the author of nature has given some men a license, to enslave others; this is denied and proof is de-

manded. If it mean, that God hath made some of capacities inferior to others, and that the last have a right to enslave the first; this argument will prove, that some of the citizens of every country, have a right to enslave other citizens of the same country; nay, that some have a right to enslave their own brothers and sisters. But if this argument mean, that God in his providence suffers some men to be enslaved, and that this proves, that from the beginning he intended they should be enslaved, and made them with this intention; the answer is, that in like manner he suffers some men to be murdered, and in this sense, he intended and made them to be murdered. Yet no man in his senses will hence argue the lawfulness of murder.

11. It is further pretended, that no other men, than negroes, can endure labor in the hot climates of the West Indies and the southern states. But does this appear to be fact? In all other climates, the laboring people are the most healthy. And I confess I have not yet seen evidence, but that those who have been accustomed to labor and are inured to those climates, can bear labor there also. However, taking for granted the fact asserted in this objection, does it follow, that the inhabitants of those countries have a right to enslave the Africans to labor for them? No more surely than from the circumstance, that you are feeble and cannot labor, it follows, that you have a right to enslave your robust neighbor. As in all other cases, the feeble and those who choose not to labor, and yet wish to have their lands cultivated, are necessitated to hire the robust to labor for them; so no reason can be given, why the inhabitants of hot climates, should not either perform their own labor, or hire those who can perform it, whether negroes or others.

If our traders went to the coast of Africa to murder the inhabitants, or to rob them of their property, all would own that such murderous or piratical practices are wicked and abominable. Now it is as really wicked to rob a man of his liberty, as to rob him of his life; and it is much more wicked, than to rob him of his property. All men agree to condemn highway robbery. And the slave trade is as much a greater wickedness than highway robbery, as liberty is more valuable than property. How strange is it then, that in the same nation highway robbery should be punished with death, and the slave trade be encouraged by national authority.

We all dread political slavery, or subjection to the arbitrary power of a king or of any man or men not deriving their authority from the people. Yet such a state is inconceivably preferable to the slavery of the negroes. Suppose that in the late war we

had been subdued by Great Britain; we should have been taxed without our consent. But these taxes would have amounted to but a small part of our property. Whereas the negroes are deprived of all their property; no part of their earnings is their own; the whole is their masters. In a conquered state we should have been at liberty to dispose of ourselves and of our property in most cases, as we should choose. We should have been free to live in this or that town or place; in any part of the country, or to remove out of the country; to apply to this or that business; to labor or not; and excepting a sufficiency for the taxes, to dispose of the fruit of our labor to our own benefit, or that of our children, or of any other person. But the unhappy negroes in slavery can do none of these things. They must do what they are commanded, and as much as they are commanded, on pain of the lash. They must live where they are placed, and must confine themselves to that spot, on pain of death.

So that Great Britain in her late attempt to enslave America, committed a very small crime indeed in comparison with the crime of those who enslave the Africans.

The arguments which have been urged against the slave trade, are with little variation applicable to the holding of slaves. He who holds a slave, continues to deprive him of that liberty, which was taken from him on the coast of Africa. And if it were wrong to deprive him of it in the first instance, why not in the second? If this be true, no man hath a better right to retain his negro in slavery, than he had to take him from his native African shores. And every man who cannot show, that his negro hath by his voluntary conduct forfeited his liberty, is obligated immediately to manumit him. Undoubtedly we should think so, were we holden in the same slavery in which the negroes are; and our text requires us to do to others, as we would that they should do to us.

To hold a slave, who has a right to his liberty, is not only a real crime, but a very great one. Many good christians have wondered how Abraham, the father of the faithful, could take Hagar to his bed; and how Sarah, celebrated as an holy woman, could consent to this transaction; also how David and Solomon could have so many wives and concubines, and yet be real saints. Let such inquire how it is possible, that our fathers and men now alive, universally reputed pious, should hold negro slaves, and yet be the subjects of real piety; and whether to reduce a man, who hath the same right to liberty as any other man, to a state of absolute slavery, or to hold him in that state, be not as great a crime as concubinage or fornication? I presume it will not be denied, that to commit theft or robbery every day of a man's life,

is as great a sin as to commit fornication in one instance. But to steal a man or to rob him of his liberty is a greater sin, than to steal his property, or to take it by violence. And to hold a man in a state of slavery, who has a right to his liberty, is to be every day guilty of robbing him of his liberty, or of manstealing. The consequence is inevitable, that other things being the same, to hold a negro slave, unless he have forfeited his liberty, is a greater sin in the sight of God, than concubinage or fornication.

Does this conclusion seem strange to any of you? Let me entreat you to weigh it candidly before you reject it. You will not deny, that liberty is more valuable than property; and that it is a greater sin to deprive a man of his whole liberty during life, than to deprive him of his whole property; or that man-stealing is a greater crime than robbery. Nor will you deny, that to hold in slavery a man who was stolen, is substantially the same crime as to steal him. These principles being undeniable, I leave it to yourselves to draw the plain and necessary consequence. And if your consciences shall, in spite of all opposition, tell you, that while you hold your negroes in slavery, you do wrong, exceedingly wrong; that you do not, as you would that men should do to you; that you commit sin in the sight of God; that you daily violate the plain rights of mankind, and that in a higher degree, than if you committed theft or robbery; let me beseech you not to stifle this conviction, but attend to it and act accordingly, lest you add to your former guilt, that of sinning against the light of truth, and of your own consciences.

To convince yourselves, that your information being the same, to hold a negro slave is a greater sin than fornication, theft or robbery, you need only bring the matter home to yourselves. I am willing to appeal to your own consciences, whether you would not judge it to be a greater sin for a man to hold you or your child during life in such slavery, as that of the negroes, than for him to indulge in one instance of licentious conduct or in one instance to steal or rob. Let conscience speak, and I will submit to its decision.

This question seems to be clearly decided by revelation. Ex. 21: 16, "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." Thus death is, by the divine express declaration, the punishment due to the crime of man-stealing. But death is not the punishment declared by God to be due to fornication, theft or robbery in common cases. Therefore we have the divine authority to assert, that man-stealing is a greater crime than fornication, theft, or robbery. Now to hold in slavery a man who has a right to lib-

erty, is substantially the same crime as to deprive him of his liberty. And to deprive of liberty and reduce to slavery, a man who has a right to liberty, is man-stealing. For it is immaterial whether he be taken and reduced to slavery clandestinely or by open violence. Therefore if the negroes have a right to liberty, to hold them in slavery is man-stealing, which we have seen is, by God himself, declared to be a greater crime than fornication, theft or robbery.

Perhaps, though this truth be clearly demonstrable both from reason and revelation, you scarcely dare receive it, because it seems to bear hardly on the characters of our pious fathers, who held slaves. But they did it ignorantly and in unbelief of the truth; as Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon were ignorant that polygamy or concubinage was wrong. As to domestic slavery our fathers lived in a *time of ignorance which God winked at; but now he commandeth all men everywhere to repent* of this wickedness, and *to break off this sin by righteousness, and this iniquity by shewing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening out of their tranquillity.* You therefore to whom the present blaze of light as to this subject has reached, cannot sin at so cheap a rate as our fathers.

But methinks I hear some say, I have bought my negro; I have paid a large sum for him; I cannot lose this sum, and therefore I cannot manumit him. Alas! this is *hitting the nail on the head.* This brings into view the true cause which makes it so difficult to convince men of what is right in this case. You recollect the story of Amaziah's hiring an hundred thousand men of Israel, for an hundred talents, to assist him against the Edomites; and that when by the word of the Lord, he was forbidden to take those hired men with him to the war, he cried out, "But what shall we do for the hundred talents, which I have given to the army of Israel?" In this case, the answer of God was, "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this." To apply this to the subject before us, God is able to give thee much more than thou shalt lose by manumitting thy slave.

You may plead that you use your slave well; you are not cruel to him, but feed and clothe him comfortably, etc. Still every day you rob him of a most valuable and important right. And a highwayman, who robs a man of his money in the most easy and complaisant manner, is still a robber; and murder may be effected in a manner the least cruel and tormenting; still it is murder.

Having now taken that view of our subject, which was proposed, we may in reflection see abundant reason to acquiesce in

the institution of this society. If the slave trade be unjust, and as gross a violation of the rights of mankind, as would be, if the Africans should transport us into perpetual slavery in Africa, then to unite our influence against it, is a duty which we owe to mankind, to ourselves and to God too. It is but doing as we would that men should do to us. Nor is it enough that we have formed the society; we must do the duties of it. The first of these is to put an end to the slave trade. The second is to relieve those who, contrary to the laws of the country, are holden in bondage. Another is to defend those in their remaining legal and natural rights, who are by law holden in bondage. Another and not the least important object of this society, I conceive to be, to increase and disperse the light of truth with respect to the subject of African slavery, and so prepare the way for its total abolition. For until men in general are convinced of the injustice of the trade and of the slavery itself, comparatively little can be done to effect the most important purposes of the institution.

It is not to be doubted, that the trade is even now carried on from this state. Vessels are from time to time fitted out for the coast of Africa, to transport the negroes to the West Indies and other parts. Nor will an end be put to this trade, without vigilance and strenuous exertion on the part of this society, or other friends of humanity, nor without a patient enduring of the opposition and odium of all who are concerned in it, of their friends and of all who are of the opinion that it is justifiable. Among these we are doubtless to reckon some of large property and considerable influence. And if the laws and customs of the country equally allowed of it, many, and perhaps as many as now plead for the right of the African slave trade, would plead for the right of kidnapping us, the citizens of the United States, and of selling us into perpetual slavery. If then we dare not incur the displeasure of such men, we may as well dissolve the society, and leave the slave trade to be carried on, and the negroes to be kidnapped, and though free in this state, to be sold into perpetual slavery in distant parts, at the pleasure of any man, who wishes to make gain by such abominable practices.

Though we must expect opposition, yet if we be steady and persevering, we need not fear, that we shall fail of success. The advantages, which the cause has already gained, are many and great. Thirty years ago, scarcely a man in this country thought either the slave trade or the slavery of negroes to be wrong. But now how many and able advocates in private life, in our legislatures, in Congress, have appeared and have openly and ir-

refragably pleaded the rights of humanity in this as well as other instances? Nay, the great body of the people from New Hampshire to Virginia inclusively, have obtained such light, that in all those states the further importation of slaves is prohibited by law. And in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, slavery is totally abolished.

Nor is the light concerning this subject confined to America. It hath appeared with great clearness in France, and produced remarkable effects in the National Assembly. It hath also shone in bright beams in Great Britain. It flashes with splendor in the writings of Clarkson and in the proceedings of several societies formed to abolish the slave trade. Nor hath it been possible to shut it out of the British parliament. This light is still increasing, and in time will effect a total revolution. And if we judge of the future by the past, within fifty years from this time, it will be as shameful for a man to hold a negro slave, as to be guilty of common robbery or theft. But it is our duty to remove the obstacles which intercept the rays of this light, that it may reach not only public bodies, but every individual. And when it shall have obtained a general spread, shall have dispelled all darkness, and slavery shall be no more; it will be an honor to be recorded in history, as a society which was formed, and which exerted itself with vigor and fidelity, to bring about an event so necessary and conducive to the interests of humanity and virtue, to the support of the rights and to the advancement of the happiness of mankind.

APPENDIX.

Some objections to the doctrine of the preceding sermon, have been mentioned to the author, since the delivery of it. Of these it may be proper to take some notice.

1. The slaves are in a better situation than that in which they were in their own country; especially as they have opportunity to know the Christian religion and to secure the saving blessings of it. Therefore it is not an injury, but a benefit to bring them into this country, even though their importation be accompanied and followed with slavery. It is also said, that the situation of many negroes under their masters is much better, than it would be, were they free in this country; that they are much better fed and clothed, and are much more happy; that therefore to hold them in slavery is so far from a crime, that it is a meritorious act.

With regard to these pleas, it is to be observed, that every man hath a right to judge concerning his own happiness, and to choose the means of obtaining or promoting it; and to deprive him of this right is the very injury of which we complain; it is to enslave him. Because we judge, that the negroes are more happy in this country, in a state of slavery, than in the enjoyment of liberty in Africa, we have no more right to enslave them and bring them into this country, than we have to enslave any of our neighbors, who we judge would be more happy under our control, than they are at present under their own. Let us make the case our own. Should we believe, that we were justly treated, if the Africans should carry us into perpetual slavery in Africa, on the ground that they judged, that we should be more happy in that state, than in our present situation?

As to the opportunity which the negroes in this country are said to have, to become acquainted with Christianity; this with respect to many is granted; but what follows from it? It would be ridiculous to pretend, that this is the motive on which they act who import them, or they who buy and hold them in slavery. Or if this were the motive, it would not sanctify either the trade or the slavery. We are not at liberty to do evil, that good may come; to commit a crime more aggravated than theft or robbery, that we may make a proselyte to Christianity. Neither our Lord Jesus Christ, nor any of his apostles, has taught us this mode of propagating the faith.

2. It is said that the doctrine of the preceding sermon imputes that as a crime to individuals, which is owing to the state of society. This is granted; and what follows? It is owing to the state of society, that our neighbors, the Indians, roast their captives; and does it hence follow, that such conduct is not to be imputed to the individual agents as a crime? It is owing to the state of society in Popish countries, that thousands worship the beast and his image; and is that worship therefore not to be imputed as a crime to those, who render it? Read the Revelation of St. John. The state of society is such, that drunkenness and adultery are very common in some countries; but will it follow, that those vices are innocent in those countries?

3. If I be ever so willing to manumit my slave, I cannot do it without being holden to maintain him, when he shall be sick or shall be old and decrepit. Therefore I have a right to hold him as a slave. The same argument will prove, that you have a right to enslave your children or your parents; as you are equally holden to maintain them in sickness and in decrepit old age. The argument implies, that in order to secure the money, which

you are afraid the laws of your country will some time or other oblige you to pay; it is right for you to rob a free man of his liberty or be guilty of man-stealing. On the ground of this argument every town or parish obligated by law, to maintain its helpless poor, has a right to sell into perpetual slavery all the people, who may probably or even possibly occasion a public expense.

4. After all, it is not safe to manumit the negroes; they would cut our throats; they would endanger the peace and government of the state. Or at least they would be so idle, that they would not provide themselves with necessaries; of course they must live by thievery and plundering.

This objection requires a different answer, as it respects the northern, and as it respects the southern states. As it respects the northern, in which slaves are so few, there is not the least foundation to imagine, that they would combine or make insurrection against the government; or that they would attempt to murder their masters. They are much more likely to kill their masters, in order to obtain their liberty, or to revenge the abuse they receive, while it is still continued, than to do it after the abuse hath ceased, and they are restored to their liberty. In this case, they would from a sense of gratitude, or at least from a conviction of the justice of their masters, feel a strong attachment, instead of a murderous disposition.

Nor is there the least danger, but that by a proper vigilance of the selectmen, and by a strict execution of the laws now existing, the negroes might in a tolerable degree be kept from idleness and pilfering.

All this hath been verified by experiment. In Massachusetts, all the negroes in the commonwealth were by their new constitution liberated in a day; and none of the ill consequences objected followed either to the commonwealth or to individuals.

With regard to the southern states, the case is different. The negroes in some parts of those states are a great majority of the whole, and therefore the evils objected would, in case of a general manumission at once, be more likely to take place. But in the first place there is no prospect, that the conviction of the truth exhibited in the preceding discourse, will at once, take place in the minds of all the holders of slaves. The utmost that can be expected, is that it will take place gradually in one after another, and that of course the slaves will be gradually manumitted. Therefore the evils of a general manumission at once, are dreaded without reason.

If in any state the slaves should be manumitted in considerable

numbers at once, or so that the number of free negroes should become large; various measures might be concerted to prevent the evils feared. One I beg leave to propose: That overseers of the free negroes be appointed from among themselves, who shall be empowered to inspect the morals and management of the rest, and report to proper authority those who are vicious, idle or incapable of managing their own affairs, and that such authority dispose of them under proper masters for a year or other term, as is done, perhaps in all the states, with regard to the poor white people in like manner vicious, idle or incapable of management. Such black overseers would naturally be ambitious to discharge the duties of their office; they would in many respects have much more influence than white men with their countrymen; and other negroes looking forward to the same honorable distinction, would endeavor to deserve it by their improvement and good conduct.

But after all, this whole objection, if it were ever so entirely founded on truth; if the freed negroes would probably rise against their masters, or combine against government; rests on the same ground, as the apology of the robber, who murders the man whom he has robbed. Says the robber to himself, I have robbed this man, and now if I let him go he will kill me, or he will complain to authority and I shall be apprehended and hung. I must therefore kill him. There is no other way of safety for me. The coincidence between this reasoning and that of the objection under consideration, must be manifest to all. And if this reasoning of the robber be inconclusive; if the robber have no right on that ground to kill the man whom he hath robbed; neither have the slave holders any more right to continue to hold their slaves. If the robber ought to spare the life of the man robbed, take his own chance and esteem himself happy if he can escape justice; so the slave holders ought immediately to let their slaves go free, treat them with the utmost kindness, by such treatment endeavor to pacify them with respect to past injuries, and esteem themselves happy, if they can compromise the matter in this manner.

In all countries in which the slaves are a majority of the inhabitants, the masters lie in a great measure at the mercy of the slaves, and may most rationally expect sooner or later, to be cut off, or driven out by the slaves, or to be reduced to the same level and to be mingled with them into one common mass. This I think is by ancient and modern events demonstrated to be the natural and necessary course of human affairs. The hewers of wood and drawers of water among the Israelites, the Helots among the Lacedemonians, the slaves among the Romans, the

villains and vassals in most of the kingdoms of Europe under the feudal system, have long since mixed with the common mass of the people, and shared the common privileges and honors of their respective countries. And in the French West-Indies the Mulattoes and free negroes are already become so numerous and powerful a body, as to be allowed by the National Assembly to enjoy the common rights and honors of free men. These facts plainly show, what the whites in the West-Indies and the Southern States are to expect concerning their posterity, that in time it will infallibly be amalgamated with the slave population, or else they must quit the country to the Africans whom they have hitherto holden in bondage.

SERMON VI.

ALL DIVINE TRUTH PROFITABLE.*

ACTS 20: 20.—*And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you.*

THESE words are a part of the farewell discourse of Paul, to the elders of the church at Ephesus. In his journey to Jerusalem, he sent for them to Miletus. When they met him there, he appealed to them as to the manner in which he had executed the ministry among them; that he had been with them at all times, serving the Lord with all humility, and with many temptations; that in his preaching he had kept back nothing which was profitable to them, but had declared to them all the counsel of God. Thus by comparing one part of the context with another, we learn that all the counsel of God is profitable and may be preached profitably to the hearers. The counsel of God is the revealed will or truth of God. Therefore our text taken with the context, affords this *doctrine:*

That all divine truth may be profitably preached to mankind in general.

Doubtless the church at Ephesus was made up chiefly of common men, men of common abilities, and of no more than common literary improvement; and if Paul preached all the counsel of God profitably to them, without doubt the same may be done with like profit to mankind in general, provided they be in like manner disposed to make a profitable use of it. I shall consider this doctrine with regard to several particular divine truths, especially those, which some imagine cannot be profitably preached to people in general.

1. The *divine existence and character* and the *mode of the divine subsistence*, so far as it is revealed in scripture. That it is profitable to preach the existence of the one only living and true God, and to preach his attributes of infinite power, knowledge, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, it is presu-

* Preached at Hamden, Jan. 11, 1792, at the ordination of the Rev. Dan Bradley, to the pastoral charge of the first church in Whitestown, N. Y. Published at New Haven.

med none will deny. The more clearly his character and attributes are exhibited, the more clearly will be seen the object and foundation of all piety; and the stronger will be the motive to the inward emotions and to the external practice of piety. Therefore such preaching must be profitable. Nor is the preaching of the mode of the divine subsistence revealed in scripture, incapable of affording profit; otherwise why was it revealed? The scripture tells us "There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one;" that the Son or "the Word was in the beginning, was with God and was God;" that "he is the true God and eternal life;" that "he is in the form of God and counts it no robbery to be equal with God;" and therefore all divine names, attributes and works are ascribed, and divine worship is rendered to him, equally as to the Father. These things argue that he is equally God, as the Father.

When our Lord claimed to be the Son of God, and said that he and his Father were one, the Jews certainly understood him to claim real divinity, or to "make himself God." Therefore they took up stones to stone him as a blasphemer; and this supposed blasphemy was the ground of the charge on which they condemned him and besought Pilate that he might be crucified; see Matt. 26: 63. John 19: 7. Undoubtedly he was a blasphemer, if being a mere man, he claimed to be God and equal with him. In exalting himself to an equality with God, he degraded God to a level with himself. Now that every blasphemer should suffer death was expressly ordained by the law of God delivered by Moses, and by that law the Jews were bound. Therefore if Jesus were not truly God and equal with the Father, he was justly crucified, either as a blasphemer, if he claimed and meant to claim, real divinity; or because he foolishly and obstinately neglected to explain himself, if he did not mean to claim real divinity, when it was manifest that his adversaries understood him to claim it.

That the Holy Ghost also is truly God, appears, as he is expressly called God; as we are baptized, and the evangelical benediction is pronounced, equally in his name, as in the name of the Father and of the Son; as he is one of the three that bear record in heaven, which three are declared to be one; and as divine works are ascribed to him.

These three are not only all divine and equal; but in opposition to the ancient and exploded doctrine of Sabellianism, they are three distinct persons, and not merely three characters of the same person. Any man may sustain and act in three characters;

and according to this account of the divine subsistence, there is no more a Trinity in God, than there is or may be in every man. It is said that "God so loved the world, that he *gave* his only begotten Son," etc.; that "God *sent* his Son into the world, that the world through him might be saved;" and Christ says, "I must work the works of him that *sent* me." And of him it is said, "Thou art my *Son*, this day have I *begotten* thee." And that Christ is often called God's *Son*, his *servant*, his *messenger*, his *angel*, his *shepherd*, his *fellow*, etc. I need not inform you. In like manner the Father is said to *give* and to *send* the Holy Ghost. But it is absurd to say a person *sends himself*, is a Son to *himself*, *begat himself*, is a servant, a messenger, an angel, a shepherd, a fellow *to himself*. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with God*, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning *with God*." But how trifling would it be to say, that a man *is with himself!*

Suppose a man sustains the three characters of a merchant, a justice of the quorum and a colonel of the militia; would it be proper to say, that the merchant sent the justice to court to try a cause? or that the merchant and the justice sent the colonel to review his regiment? or that the justice and the colonel sent the merchant to purchase goods?

As to the plea, that a man cannot act in three characters at the same time, but that God can; it affords no relief to the difficulty. The difficulty is, that this scheme admits of no other Trinity in God, than is or may be in any man, and that on this hypothesis, the Deity as to a Trinity, or triplicity of subsistence, is not distinguished from man. The answer now given is that God is distinguished from man, in that he acts in three characters at the same time, which man cannot do. But this gives no satisfaction; for no mere man can do three things at once in the same character, and he is as capable of doing three things at once in three different characters, as he is of doing three things at once in the same character; and the Deity is no more distinguished from man in his ability to do three things at once in three characters, than in his ability to do three things at once in one and the same character. Besides; the plea now under consideration supposes the Trinity to consist, not as the Sabellian scheme supposes, in the three characters which God sustains; for if the sustaining of three characters constituted the Trinity, any man is or may be a trinity; but it supposes it to consist in the divine ability to do at once three things belonging to three different characters or offices; which is to place the Trinity in the ability to do three things at once. For he who can do any

three things at once, can doubtless as easily at once do three things in three different characters, as at once do three things in one and the same character. But this makes the Trinity and the divine omnipotence to be one and the same thing.

Now that the doctrine of the Trinity is profitable will appear, if we consider how necessary the knowledge of it is to the understanding of the gospel, or the scheme of redemption by Jesus Christ. We cannot understand this scheme unless we know who the Savior is. Nor can we rationally and with comfort and satisfaction believe and trust in him, unless we know his sufficiency as a Savior; his sufficiency in power to subdue our corruptions, to sanctify our souls, to conquer satan and all our spiritual foes and to uphold us to the end; his sufficiency in wisdom to disappoint the devices of our grand adversary and of all men who are employed in his service, and to make us wise unto salvation; his sufficiency in goodness and grace to forgive our sins, to watch over us continually for our preservation, to intercede for us with the Father, and to dispense to us grace to help in time of need; and the sufficiency of his merit and the price of his redemption, or his propitiatory sacrifice, to atone for all our sins, and to procure our acceptance with the Father. Now, if he be a divine person his sufficiency in these and all other respects appears at once. But if he were not a divine person, might we not doubt, yea positively deny his sufficiency? How should a finite price redeem us from an endless or infinite punishment? How should a finite atonement satisfy for crimes deserving a punishment without end? If Christ were a mere creature, we might well disbelieve either the scriptural doctrine of endless punishment, or the sufficiency of the Redeemer. No wonder therefore, that those who disbelieve the divinity of Christ, do generally, if not universally, disbelieve the endless misery of those who die impenitent.

2. The doctrine of the *divine decrees* which teaches that God hath foreordained whatsoever cometh to pass, is a profitable doctrine. It would seem unaccountable that God should build such a vast structure, as that of the created universe, and not fix the scheme of it in his own mind, before he began; but should enter upon it without design, without plan, without system. How could this be reconciled with even human wisdom; much more with divine, which is infinite? If a human architect, about to build should collect materials of various kinds and dimensions; but should collect them without design and without determining their proper uses and applications; we should all agree to condemn him either for his ignorance or his negligence.

Thus we conceive concerning all human works; and thus we conceive concerning all the divine works throughout the material and irrational creation. And the only reason why we do not agree to conceive in like manner concerning the works of God in the rational creation, is the idea, that if God were to determine beforehand all events in this part of his kingdom, it would be inconsistent with the liberty of rational creatures. If by *liberty* be meant freedom from all certainty or certain and fixed futurity of the state and actions of rational creatures; I grant that the divine decrees are utterly inconsistent with liberty. But such a freedom from certainty is perfect uncertainty, contingence or chance; and that an action may in this sense be free, it must be uncaused and happen by pure contingence. To say, that it is not uncaused, but caused by the rational creature himself, whose action it is, affords no satisfaction; because, in the first place, if it be so, it must be caused by an antecedent action, and for the same reason that antecedent action must be caused by another action antecedent to that, and so on in an infinite series; which is absurd. In the second place, to cause our own actions will contribute nothing toward liberty, unless we cause them *freely*, that is, in the sense now under consideration, *contingently* and *by pure chance*. To cause them any otherwise, is to cause them under an established certainty or moral necessity. But what advantage it affords toward liberty, to cause our own actions by pure contingence, more than to become the subjects of them by pure contingence without our own causality, seems hard to be conceived. Indeed as to liberty and accountableness, they appear to be one and the same thing. And no wonder this scheme of liberty is inconsistent with the divine decrees; for it is equally inconsistent with any Providence in the moral world, with any wise divine government of rational creatures, with any final cause of their creation, and implies that they are equally delivered up to chance, as Epicurus' atoms were in their eternal floating in the infinite inane.

But if giving up this idea of *liberty*, we mean by that word, not a freedom from all certainty and causality from without, but a freedom from all involuntary necessity and restraint;* divine decrees are not at all inconsistent with liberty. Thus Judas chose to betray his Lord, and by the very term he chose it voluntarily; it was an act of his will, and in it he was free from all involuntary necessity; of course he was free in that act; for this is the definition of freedom now given. And surely a divine decree, that he should act voluntarily and without an involuntary

* By involuntary necessity and restraint I mean a necessity and restraint to which the will is or may be opposed.

necessity, did not bring it to pass, that he acted involuntarily and under the influence of an involuntary necessity. He was also free to have not betrayed his Lord, and to have chosen not to betray him, as he voluntarily omitted this choice, and was under no involuntary restraint from it. The Jews did not receive the gospel; yet they were free to receive it, as they voluntarily rejected it, and were free from all involuntary restraint from receiving it; for this is the very definition of liberty in case of omission of an action. And the divine decree, that they should be free from this restraint, did not bring it to pass that they should not be free from it, or subject them to it, which it must do, to be at all inconsistent with their liberty.

The divine decrees are so far from opposing or destroying human liberty, that they secure it; as they make it certain that a man will act or not act voluntarily and without any involuntary necessity or restraint, so they make it certain, that he will be free.

Some profess to believe firmly both absolute decrees and human liberty; and at the same time profess not to be able to see their consistence. The cause of this apparent inconsistence must doubtless be, that such persons entertain the erroneous idea of liberty, that it consists in contingence. Only let them define to themselves liberty, and they will be able to resolve their own doubts. If they mean by it a liberty of contingence or chance, there is, as was before observed, a perfect inconsistence between human liberty and divine decrees. But if they mean by it freedom from involuntary necessity and restraint, there is not the least inconsistence.

If any one should say, that this freedom from involuntary necessity and restraint does not contain the whole of human liberty, because beasts possess it as they act spontaneously, yet they have not liberty; I beg leave to ask such a person, what right he has to say, that beasts have not liberty, even on the supposition, that liberty implies contingence and self-determination? How does it appear, but that they act as much by chance as men do, and produce one act of will in their own mind by another, as really as men do? It is true, they are not accountable creatures; but this is because they have not sufficient intelligence or reason; and does not appear to be owing to the want of either contingence or self-determination; or rather of contingence alone; because self-determination will not imply any degree of that liberty which I am opposing, unless it be exercised with perfect contingence.

This doctrine of the divine decrees is profitable, as it shows us God's supremacy and sovereignty, and our entire dependence; as it teaches us, that nothing comes to pass which is not wisely

permitted and ordered; and that God will finally bring all things to a happy issue; since otherwise he would not have decreed them. This doctrine also happily tends to reconcile us to the dispensations of Providence, and to make us patient and content ed under all its allotments. Surely we ought to be contented, since everything takes place according to the wise, holy, good and perfect decree of God.

3. That there is a *universal providence of God* naturally follows from the divine decrees. This is but the execution of God's decrees. That the divine providence extends to every the most minute event, the scriptures teach, in that they assure us that "a sparrow falleth not to the ground, without our heavenly Father, and that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered."

This view of providence is useful, as it brings God constantly into our view. The events of providence are the language of the Deity to us. All prosperous events teach us his goodness and call for our gratitude. All adverse events are chastisements for our sins, and call for our humiliation. Thus the proper use of divine providence is, to live as seeing him who is invisible. This doctrine as well as the divine decrees, tends to reconcile us to all events which befall us. As the judge of all the earth will do right, so every event of his providence is perfectly right, as ordered by him; and as connected with the whole system, it is the best that possibly could take place; and the whole system of creation and providence taken together is the best possible. Otherwise how shall we reconcile it with the perfections of God? If God have chosen a meaner system instead of a more excellent one, it seems it must have been owing to a defect of power, of wisdom, or of goodness.

4. That we are *fallen creatures, totally depraved by nature,* is a clear and useful doctrine of scripture.

The scripture assures us, that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually;" that by nature men are "dead in trespasses and sins;" that "there is none that seeketh after God;" and that "there is no fear of God before their eyes." Surely if we had any principle of moral goodness in us by nature, it would dispose us to seek after God at least. And if we have no fear of God, we can have no moral goodness, for the fear of the Lord is the first beginning of wisdom.

The same is evident from reason also. Every man in every moral act either loves God supremely or loves some other object supremely. If any man love God supremely, he is entitled to the promises of the gospel and of eternal life. But it is not pretended by those who deny the total depravity of human nature,

that any man in a natural state loves God *supremely*, or is entitled to the promises of eternal life. Their scheme is, that mankind by nature are the subjects of a defective kind of virtue, and that in this very respect it is defective, that they do not love God supremely, but to some inferior degree only, preferring other things before him; and that when any are brought to love God supremely, they are regenerate. Now if these things be so; if man do not by nature love God supremely; of course in all his moral acts he loves some other object or objects supremely. But to love other objects supremely, and to set them in our esteem and affections above the Deity is *positive* sin. This is the sin of the selfish man, the worldling, the miser, the drunkard, the debauchee, etc. And if all men by nature, in all their moral acts, love other objects more than God; then all their moral acts are positively sinful, and all men are by nature totally depraved. Thus this doctrine is clearly taught both by scripture and reason.

The distinction which some endeavor to make in this case between *negative* and *positive* sin, pleading that though all the moral acts of the unregenerate are negatively sinful, since they do not love God supremely as they ought; yet all their moral acts are not positively sinful; appears to be groundless. For whoever does not love God supremely is guilty not only of negative sin in not loving God supremely, but of positive sin in actually loving some other object supremely, and in preference to the Deity. And if we say, that this is a negative sin only, we might as well say that the drunkard commits negative sin only, in his supreme love of his cups. The plea is, that the unregenerate do not love the objects of time and sense too much, but love God too little; and that if they loved God enough, their love to the objects of time and sense would do no harm, and would be no sin. But this same reasoning will equally prove, that the drunkard is guilty of no positive sin. For if he loved God supremely, his love to his cups would do no harm and would be no sin; because he would restrain his appetite within due bounds, and indulge it no further than is consistent with God's will and subservient to his glory. The bare involuntary appetite for strong drink is neither sin nor virtue, any more than the bare appetite for food; but the voluntary indulgence of it is a positive voluntary act; and in the drunkard, as he loves strong drink supremely, is a sinful act; and consequently is a positive sin. Now if the drunkard were to become the subject of supreme love to God, he would no longer be a drunkard, and would no longer love strong drink supremely, but would govern his appetite by the divine law. Therefore now his love or appetite for strong drink is no sin

truly, and the reason is that he does not now exercise this love nor indulge this appetite as he did before, and from the nature of the case, it is impossible he should; as now he is supposed to be a very different man and to love God supremely. His involuntary appetite or craving after strong drink may for a time remain for substance the same as before; but it is absurd and contradictory to suppose that he should indulge it, as he did before. So far as he does thus indulge it, he does not love God supremely.

Now all the moral acts of the unregenerate, as in them they equally prefer other objects before God, are as really positive acts and positively sinful too, as the drunkard's voluntary love of strong drink, and his consent to indulge his appetite. And as the latter is without dispute a positive sin, so are the former.

When it is said, that the unregenerate do not love the things of the world too much; but love God too little; if the meaning be, that they do not love those things too much, provided they loved and sought them in a manner agreeable to the will of God and in subserviency to his glory; this is granted. But to love the world thus, is to love God supremely; and to say, that the unregenerate do not love God, with a supreme affection which is too strong, when it is granted on all hands, that they do not love him supremely at all, is mere trifling. If the meaning be, that the unregenerate do not love the things of the world with too strong a direct and ultimate affection, making a supreme good of them; this is not true. This love of the things of the world is the same with the supreme love of them; and they certainly do love them supremely. Every man must have some supreme object; and in this case, there is no medium between God and the creature. And those who do not love God supremely, of course love the creature supremely; and all supreme love of the creature is too strong; as this kind of love of the creature ought not to be indulged or exercised at all.

It is said that the unregenerate do not love the world more than the regenerate do. But this is not true, if by loving the world be meant setting their hearts upon it, placing their happiness in it, depending on it, or in one word loving it supremely. If the meaning of the expression be, that the unregenerate do not take more pleasure in the enjoyment of the good things of life, than the regenerate do; this may be true; and there is no sin in taking pleasure in the enjoyments of the world, provided it be according to the will of God.

Nor is the doctrine of total depravity less useful than it is true. It is certainly useful, that we know our real state and characters. They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

The first step toward a remedy, is the investigation of our disease. A knowledge of our depravity prepares the way for conviction, humiliation, repentance, faith in the Mediator, and other christian graces. But if we misconceive concerning our own characters, the mistake may be fatal.

5. The *strictness and terrors of the divine law* are important, and the teaching of them profitable. So strict is the divine law, that it allows of no sin in external action, in word or in thought; and so terrible as to threaten an endless punishment for every violation. This is indeed dreadful; yet if it be a reality, it is most necessary to be known, and the knowledge of it may be most profitable. The greater the danger, the more necessary is the knowledge of it, and the stronger the motive to escape.

6. That there is *salvation for mankind through Christ, and through him only*, is a most important and profitable doctrine. The scriptures abundantly teach both these particulars. "Christ came to seek and to save them that were lost." "Through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins." "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Thus there is provided by infinite grace an all-sufficient Savior, who is every way able to save to the uttermost, all who come to him; and at the same time we are shut up to the faith of Christ.

I am sensible, that many have flattered themselves, that they may obtain pardon on the ground of their bare repentance, without an atonement. But this is directly contrary, not only to scripture, but to reason too. The voice of scripture we have in the text just now quoted; and the voice of reason coincides with that of scripture. If the penitent transgressor be released from punishment on his repentance, he is released either on the footing of *justice* or of *grace*. If on the footing of *justice*, there is no pardon in the case, and it is absurd to talk of it. And on this hypothesis repentance is either the complete righteousness required by the law transgressed, or it is the complete penalty of it. If it were the complete righteousness, it would preclude all transgression; which is contrary to the supposition and the very nature of the case, which implies that there is a transgression of the law. It would also preclude itself, as repentance cannot have any foundation without trangression. Nor is repentance the complete penalty of the law. That is a curse; but repentance is a blessing. That is an evil on the whole; something which on the

whole is no advantage, but a disadvantage to the subject; whereas repentance is on the whole no evil, no disadvantage to the subject, but an inconceivable advantage. Therefore it is not the curse of the law; and the penitent is without an atonement; liable to that curse, and cannot be released from it on the footing of justice.

If the penitent be by justice entitled to impunity, it will follow, that transgression or sin is no moral evil. Moral evil deserves some punishment which is a real evil. But as has been observed, repentance is no real evil, but a good, a benefit, a privilege; and if transgression deserve nothing but repentance, it deserves no real evil, and no real punishment; but a privilege, a benefit instead of a punishment; and therefore is no moral evil. Moral evil is hateful in itself, or on account of its native tendency. It therefore deserves to be hated, and may justly be hated by God in every instance of its existence; and this just hatred of it may justly be manifested in both words and actions; and such manifestation of hatred by God is punishment. But if transgression do not in every instance deserve this manifestation of divine hatred, it does not deserve the hatred itself, and therefore is not a moral evil.

Perhaps it may be objected, that transgression does not indeed deserve any manifestation of divine hatred after repentance, though it do deserve it before repentance. To this I answer; that if transgression deserve before repentance both hatred and the manifestation of it, and do not deserve it after repentance; it must be because repentance is the full punishment of it, and all the evil which it deserves. Yet this, as we have just seen, cannot be true, as repentance is on the whole no real evil at all, but a very great benefit; and if this be what transgression deserves, it deserves a reward and not a punishment, and therefore is rather a moral good than a moral evil.* Moral evil is an infringement on the good of the divine system; that public good therefore requires reparation or security against future infringement of the like kind, whether by the transgressor or others. This is due to the public. But repentance makes no reparation; it gives no such security. If it did, it would be a full satisfaction for transgression, and would be all the punishment which it deserves, or would be the penalty and curse of the divine law. But this will not be pretended. And as repentance is no reparation or satisfaction for damage done to the public good, if the public good require no reparation after repentance, it requires none before; and this proves that no damage hath been done to

* A virtue, a meritorious act, instead of a vice or crime.

the public, or no moral evil hath been committed by the transgression of the law.

Or if the penitent transgressor be supposed to be released from punishment on the footing of *grace*, this cannot be admitted by even the infinite goodness and grace of God, unless it be consistent with the general good of his kingdom, which is the universe. But on the present supposition of the release of the penitent on the footing of *grace*, he does not deserve release, but justly deserves punishment. Yet he does not deserve punishment, unless the general good require it. For when there is no atonement made, no man deserves any further punishment, than is necessary to the general good. Therefore if the penitent do on the footing of justice deserve punishment, the general good requires that he be punished. But if it require this, it does not and cannot at the same time require or admit that he be pardoned.

So that on either supposition, there can be no pardon dispensed on bare repentance. If *justice* require that it be dispensed on this ground, it is improperly called pardon; there neither is nor can be any pardon in the case; and sin or transgression on this supposition deserves no punishment, and therefore is no moral evil. If *goodness* require that pardon be dispensed on bare repentance; the general good requires the same. If the general good require the pardon of the penitent on the bare ground of his repentance, he does not deserve punishment, and there can be no pardon in his release. From the same supposition it follows, that transgression is no moral evil. Surely that is no moral evil, which deserves no punishment, and which the general good does not require should be punished. Therefore as long as the transgression of the law of God is a moral evil, so long the transgressor cannot be released from punishment on the ground of his repentance only.

If these observations be just, do they not afford us conclusive arguments against the essential part of both the Socinian and Deistic system? Both these systems rest on the foundation, that divine goodness requires the pardon of the transgressor in consequence of his bare repentance. If this foundation be removed, both these systems will inevitably fall to the ground.

Thus we see the necessity and usefulness of the evangelical doctrine of forgiveness through an atonement. It is necessary to our comfort, and even to any hope; as otherwise we should be in a state of absolute desperation. But what an all-sufficient and glorious foundation of hope is there laid for us in the atonement of Jesus Christ! The doctrine of the atonement therefore is useful to raise our hope, to lead us to repentance, to fix our

faith, to inspire us with gratitude, and to enliven within us every christian grace.

7. *Regeneration* is another very profitable doctrine of the gospel. This doctrine implies that by nature we are destitute of all spiritual good; that all holiness in man is produced by a special and supernatural influence of the Divine Spirit; and that there is no natural or stated connection between any exercises, doings or strivings of the natural man and true holiness.

As to particular modes of explaining this doctrine, wise and good men have differed. Some hold that a new principle or propensity may be implanted in the heart long before any holy emotions or affections take place; some, that affections begin immediately in consequence of the implantation of the new principle; some that there is properly no new principle created; but that the Holy Spirit immediately produces holy affections in regeneration, and, thenceforward produces them in a stated manner according to a divine constitution. But these speculations seem not to be essential to the doctrine. If we hold that in regeneration a special, and supernatural influence of the Holy Ghost produces holy acts, emotions or affections in the heart; and that this influence once given is given statedly, producing according to a divinely established order the like holy acts; this seems to be the substance of this important doctrine.

Regeneration properly means the divine agency put forth to produce the new creature. Under the operation of this agency the subject is passive. Sometimes however the word regeneration is used to include the turning of the man from sin to holiness, which is more properly called conversion; and in this the man is active. In regeneration used in the large sense, the subject is both passive and active; passive as he is the subject of the divine operation, and active in the effect of this operation, which is an actual turning from sin to God and his service.

Much has been said concerning regeneration *by light, and by moral suasion.* If they who use this language mean no more, than that men are not regenerated in paganism, and so without the light and motives of the gospel; and that under the gospel they are commonly regenerated in consequence of attention to the gospel and of awakening and conviction in view of the truths and motives of it; and that the regenerate turn from sin to God in view of those truths and motives, though not by them as the efficient cause; I shall not oppose them, though I think their phraseology in many instances leads to a different understanding. In the sense now explained, we may understand the following texts, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth;"

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever;" "I have begotten you through the gospel," etc.

But if they mean, that by the motives of the gospel sinners are persuaded to repent and return to God; and that no special or supernatural influence is used to this effect; this implies a denial of the entire depravity of human nature, and that the human heart is by nature well disposed to duty, and that all that is wanting to regeneration is proper information.

Or if the advocates for regeneration by light mean, that a supernatural and merely intellectual light, not consisting in holy affection nor implying it, is first let into the mind, and that then this light changes the heart; this implies, that men by nature have not sufficient capacity or faculty of understanding to know their duty; and that therefore their natural intellect must be supernaturally increased; and that as soon as this is increased, they see their duty, and their hearts at once comply with it. This also, you see, implies a denial of entire depravity, and supposes that the human heart is by nature inclined to receive and comply with the truth, but is hindered by an insurmountable weakness of the intellect, a weakness not depending on the will. And is this indeed so? Is the mathematician rendered by regeneration more capable of diving deeply into the abyss of mathematics? the philosopher, of tracing the influence of the various principles and powers of matter and motion? or the politician, of understanding the interests of his own and foreign nations? This will not be pretended. Yet this would necessarily be the case, if in regeneration there were an increase of the natural faculty of intellect.

The opposite sentiment to this of regeneration by light is that of regeneration by the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. This is abundantly taught in scripture, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit."

The objection to this idea of regeneration by immediate divine influence is, that it is inconsistent with our liberty; and that this influence is a *physical* influence, implying an irresistible necessity. The answer to this objection is, that if by liberty be meant a freedom from all certainty and certain causality, or which is the same, a liberty of contingence; it is granted, that this idea of regeneration is totally inconsistent with liberty. And this idea of

liberty must be meant by those who make this objection, if they mean anything to the purpose. Self-determination, of which they say so much, implies no liberty inconsistent with an immediate and efficacious influence of the Spirit, unless it be exercised contingently. Self-determinate acts produced by a necessary causality, may, as to liberty, be as well produced by the immediate influence of the Spirit, as by any other necessary causality, even though it were the causality of the mind itself. But if by liberty be meant freedom from all involuntary necessity and restraint, there is no inconsistence between regeneration by the immediate influence of the Spirit and human liberty. Because in regeneration the man is made "willing in the day of God's power."

Besides; regeneration by immediate influence of the Spirit is no more inconsistent with human liberty, in any sense of the term, than regeneration by *moral suasion*. If regeneration be effected by moral suasion, it is effected by moral motives; and under the influence of those motives the man is passive, as passive as under the influence of the divine Spirit; and the causal influence of those motives by which regeneration is effected, is as necessary, irresistible, indefeasible and unfrustrable, as the immediate influence of the Spirit, when that regenerates. For no greater power or influence of the Spirit is supposed or pleaded for, than is requisite and sufficient to the effect; and that influence of motives which is requisite and entirely sufficient to the effect, is supposed in regeneration by moral suasion. Where then is there more liberty in the one case than in the other? The influence of moral suasion is supposed to be the real cause of regeneration, and therefore to be sufficient and effectual to the production of it. To say, that the influence of moral suasion is not the real and effectual cause of regeneration, is to give up the doctrine of regeneration by moral suasion.

As to what is said concerning a *physical* influence in regeneration, if by this be intended the immediate influence of the divine Spirit, we avow it; and it appears to be no more inconsistent with liberty, in any sense of the term, than what is called the *moral* influence of *moral suasion*. Nor is the distinction between a *physical* and *moral* influence, if the latter be *effectual*, of any use or importance in this subject, so far as liberty is concerned; and a physical influence, so far from being inconsistent with human liberty, absolutely secures and establishes it, if by liberty we mean spontaneity and freedom from involuntary necessity and restraint; or, which comes to the same, unless by liberty we mean *absolute contingence*.

That the doctrine of regeneration is profitable, is manifest, as it is so instructive, teaching us what we are by nature and what we must be by divine grace; as it is so practical and experimental; and as it so happily tends to awaken the sinner, to animate the saint, to humble all and lead all to self-examination.

8. That it is the indispensable duty of unregenerate sinners *immediately to repent and comply with the gospel*, is also a profitable doctrine. You are sensible, brethren, that some deny this. They plead, that sinners are in themselves unable to repent and comply with the gospel; that therefore it is not their duty; and that in their unregenerate state they are bound in duty to use the means of grace only. But nothing is plainer from the scriptures, than that it is the immediate duty of sinners to repent and believe on Christ. The language of scripture is, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;" "This is his commandment, that ye should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." And the sum of Paul's preaching was "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

The same is plain from reason too. If repentance be not a duty, impenitence is no sin; and if impenitence be no sin, neither is any affection of heart or want of affection; such as unbelief, enmity against God, selfishness, malice, etc. And if no affection of heart be sinful, neither is any external action proceeding from such affection. Thus this hypothesis will shut all sin out of the world.

As to the inability of the sinner to repent and believe savingly, it is wholly of the moral kind; it is voluntary, and of course his will is not at all opposed to it, nor will be opposed to it, while it remains and so far as it remains. For as soon and as far as the will opposes this inability, the inability itself ceases. Inasmuch therefore as this inability consists wholly in an indisposition or unwillingness to repent and comply with the gospel, it is no excuse for impenitence and unbelief, any more than the unwillingness of the drunkard to forsake his cups, is an excuse for his intemperance; or the unwillingness of the indolent to labor, is an excuse for their idleness.

This doctrine is exceedingly profitable, as it so immediately tends to conviction, which is the ordinary antecedent of conversion. Indeed it seems to be absolutely necessary to conviction and to repentance. For how can a man be, according to truth, convinced of the sin of impenitence, and repent of that sin if it be no sin at all? If repentance be not the duty of the unregenerate, no man regenerate or unregenerate can consistently with

truth repent of the impenitence, unbelief, alienation of heart from Christ, enmity against God, selfishness, or want of true love to men, of which he is or ever was the subject while unregenerate. How stupifying and hardening therefore is the doctrine, which teaches that it is not the duty of the unregenerate to repent immediately with repentance unto life and cordially to comply with the gospel? Although then the means of grace be useful and important; yet to preach up those only; or to preach so that the hearers receive the idea, that the use of means is the whole duty to which they are now obligated; is to take the most direct way to settle them down in security, and to prevent conviction, conversion, repentance and reconciliation to God.

9. *Justification by faith alone* is a most important and profitable doctrine. What relates to justification by our own repentance and good works has been already considered. I shall now endeavor to state the proper idea of justification.

(1) It is not the bestowment of personal righteousness. This is sanctification, which is begun in regeneration and thenceforward progressively carried on.

(2) It is not declaring the believer to be just, or to stand right with respect to the divine law. Some have expressed themselves thus on this important subject; but surely without due consideration. For God can never declare a man to be just, unless he be in reality just; nor can he ever declare him to stand right with respect to the divine law unless he do in fact stand right with respect to it. And if he be just and do stand right with respect to the law, he may be justified on the footing of the law; and there is no need of the gospel or of the grace or the atonement of it, to his justification.

(3) It is not *reckoning*, *considering*, or *viewing* the believer as just or standing right with *the law*, or as having a *legal* right to justification. The believer is indeed not only acquitted from condemnation, but entitled to the favor of God and eternal life in glory. But he is not thus acquitted, etc. as standing right with the law, but as a sinner, a trangressor of the law, and therefore is acquitted entirely on the ground of free grace through the atonement; which is a ground totally different from that of the law and its righteousness. Neither does God *reckon*, *consider* or *view* any man as being what he really is not; unless by those words be meant, not any *mental* acts of God, but mere *external conduct* and *treatment*.

(4) Justification positively consists in *treating* the believer in many important respects, as though he were just, and had in fact never transgressed the law. He is as effectually acquitted from

the condemnation of the law, and entitled to the favor of God here and hereafter, as if he had always perfectly obeyed the law. Thus he is *treated* as a just person; as if he stood right with the law, and as if he had the complete righteousness of it, by his own personal obedience; but all this is wholly for the sake of Christ and his atonement. This is justification, and the whole of it. This is the imputation of righteousness to the believer. This is the imputation to him of the righteousness of Christ.

That this is an important, profitable and comforting doctrine, it is presumed none among us will deny.

10. That we are *accountable to God* is another profitable doctrine. Nothing is more clear from scripture than this. "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness;" and the whole process of that day is described. The objection to this doctrine is, How can we be accountable, if we be dependent? If all good actions proceed from a divine influence, and all evil actions from original depravity? If we act not independently and from ourselves? or if we do not cause our own actions both external and mental? To this I answer: If by causing our own mental actions be meant any more than that we are the subjects of them, it must be meant that we cause them by an antecedent act. But for the same reason, we are not accountable for that antecedent act, unless we cause that too by an act still preceding that; and so on till we come to the first act of which we ever were the subjects. And of this we cannot be the cause; for by the supposition it is the first act, and therefore it is absurd to suppose that we should have put forth a prior act, by which to cause it. Now if we be not accountable for that first act, as not having caused it ourselves, we are not accountable for any one of the subsequent series. For this which we cause not, causes all the rest. They all depend on that cause which operates independently of us; and therefore on the ground of this objection, we are no more accountable for any of them, than we are for those acts which proceed from a divine influence or from original depravity. Besides; if we cause our own volitions, we doubtless cause them *freely* and not necessarily; otherwise we may as well not cause them at all. But the word *freely* in this connection, if it be at all to the purpose, must be used in opposition to a real and absolute certainty, and must mean *contingently* and *by mere chance*. But to cause our own volitions by pure contingence is no more favorable to accountableness, than to become the subjects of them by immediate contingence, without any antecedent and contingent exertion of our own. And why we should be more accountable

for actions arising from pure contingence, than for those which are produced in us by some external cause or motive, is hard to be conceived. It is certain by the very terms that we are no more the causes of the former than of the latter.

The plain dictate of reason is, that we are accountable whenever we deserve praise or blame; and that we do deserve praise or blame, whenever we exercise tempers or have volitions either good or evil, benevolent or malicious, kind or selfish; and this without any inquiry whether those volitions happened by pure contingence, or proceeded from some cause whether within or without the mind.

Thus I have endeavored to illustrate our doctrine, that all divine truth may be profitably preached to mankind, by a particular consideration of some of the most important divine truths; especially those truths, the preaching of which many are apt to think is not profitable. And if these be profitable, we may safely conclude the same concerning all other divine truths.

If this doctrine be true, we see how groundless the idea of some is, who imagine that there are certain doctrines in scripture which are not to be preached, and cannot be preached with profit to the hearers. If this were fact, then Paul, whose preaching was so profitable, did not preach those doctrines. Yet he tells us, that he declared all the counsel of God. And as his preaching was under the influence of inspiration, we may be sure that this kept him from everything unprofitable.

Having thus finished what was proposed in the doctrinal part of our discourse, we proceed to the usual addresses, to the pastor elect, and to the church or its representatives present.

I. To the pastor elect.

My dear Sir,—You are now entering on a most weighty, extensive, and useful employment. May you undertake it from right motives, and discharge it with success and acceptance by your master and your judge. That you may thus discharge it, you must be and approve yourself to be a real christian, a prudent man and a man of knowledge in the line of your profession.

1. You must be and approve yourself to be, a real christian. To maintain your character in this respect, you must live christianity, live in the exercise of the graces of christianity and in the practice of the external duties of it. Be careful to cultivate more and more divine grace in your own soul. Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Your growth in grace will show itself, not affectedly, but naturally, easily and beautifully. Thus you will acquire in a greater and greater degree the confidence of your people. Thus will your

light shine before men, and your face like that of Moses, appear with a divine lustre.

In this way you will practically, as well as verbally, inculcate the same life and temper on others, which they observe in you; and you will be free to assist them in all their spiritual concerns. To this end let me recommend it to you, to be ever ready to converse with your people most freely on spiritual subjects. Never shun religious conversation, if the time and place properly admit of it. If you should shun it on proper occasions, your people may become jealous of you, that you are not a real friend to experimental religion. Hence you will both lose character with them, and lose an opportunity of doing them good. Some christians are fond of relating their own experience. Let me advise you to hear them with patience. It will afford you an opportunity by judicious remarks to correct their mistakes and to assist their future progress in the christian life. Some may wish to know your experience; and I conceive it is advisable in proper time and place to indulge their wish. It may be useful to them and useful to you. At the same time it will cut off occasion from any who might otherwise take occasion, to censure you as either destitute of christian experience or unfriendly to it.

2. Be wise, prudent and circumspect in the whole of your conduct; in all your common conduct, and in all your ministerial work. I need not stand to repeat the particular maxims of common, of christian, and of ministerial prudence. They are numerous. Many of them, I dare say, have already occurred to you in the course of your own experience and observation. Others will continually occur as you proceed in life.

3. You must be a man of knowledge in the line of your profession. You have heard how the apostle declared all the counsel of God. You have also heard what hath been said to show, that all this counsel may be preached with profit to people in general. If you wish to follow the apostle's example in preaching, you must endeavor to inform yourself concerning the whole counsel of God; otherwise you cannot preach it. I doubt not but that your improvement has been according to your time and opportunities. But you are as yet young, and must necessarily fall short of the knowledge, not only of all divine truth, but of that portion of it, to which by proper application you may easily attain. Your life is to be a life of study and inquiry after the truth. This is necessary to the discharge of your duty, to your usefulness, and to your reputation as a minister. A minister uninformed in theology and the subjects which immediately relate to it, is justly despised, and must expect to lose all influence.

That you may attain to a thorough knowledge of the system of christian truths, search the scriptures daily, and avail yourself of all other means of knowledge within your reach. Instead of this, your proper business, suffer not worldly cares to engross your time and attention. This is too common even among ministers, and from your situation in a new settlement you will be under strong temptation to fall into so common an error. Let me beseech you to be on your guard against it. And there will be no necessity of your falling into this error, if your people discharge their duty.

Never at least in this country was it so necessary as at the present time, that ministers be well skilled in the whole system of christian theology; and that for these three reasons; that the country was never so knowing; that there were never so many heresies and erroneous opinions in the country; and that irreligion and profaneness never prevailed in it to so great a degree.

The more knowing your people are, the more knowledge must you have, to be able to preach to their instruction and edification; and you must preach to their instruction and edification, or you will fall into contempt. You are now to be a settled minister, statedly preaching in one place. And to preach for a series of years in one place, so as to maintain a character, is known by experience to be vastly more difficult than to preach with reputation here and there, in various parts of the country. It is also found by abundant experience, to be vastly more difficult to preserve the esteem of a people after settlement, than to obtain their esteem when preaching as a candidate for settlement. The reason of both is manifest; they require vastly more knowledge and solid worth. A man of very little knowledge may put that knowledge into a few sermons, and so far his preaching may be acceptable and useful. But when his stock of knowledge is exhausted, if he go on to preach, he must either preach without ideas, or he must exhibit the same ideas over again. In either case he must fall into contempt.

In these days of free inquiry questions will be proposed to ministers, and you must expect that they will be proposed to you. At the same time it will be expected that you be able either to answer them, or at least to say more toward an answer than any of your people. If once the idea prevail, that any of your people know more in divinity, than their minister, your character will labor. Therefore you must be superior to them all; you must be able to instruct them all. In this case you will so far acquire and maintain an influence.

The more prevalent heresies or erroneous opinions in religion

are, the more knowledge is necessary for ministers, that they may be able to confute those errors and to stop the mouths of gainsayers. And the more prevalent profaneness and irreligion are, the more knowledge, wisdom and prudence does it require to oppose the torrent, to point out properly the ruin and wickedness of those vices, and to recommend and enforce the contrary virtues.

As there never was so great necessity of knowledge in ministers; so for the reasons already mentioned, there never was so great danger of ministers falling into contempt, as at the present day. The more knowing the people are, the more able are they to discern the deficiency of their ministers; the more irreligious and profane they are, the more will they be disposed to expose their deficiency; and the more erroneous sentiments prevail, the more in number are those who will endeavor by exposing the ignorance or defects of ministers, to diminish their influence, to establish their own, and to increase their party. Therefore ministers must live by solid merit, as some men expect to go to heaven; by real goodness of heart and life, by faithfulness in their work, and by eminence in knowledge.

That you, dear sir, be really a good man, and a good and respectable minister, is peculiarly necessary and important, as you are going into the new settlements, and are the first minister of our denomination in all that part of the country. You are to be established in a new world, and are to plant the gospel there; take heed how you plant it. Sow the field with good seed only. Much depends on you with respect to the people of your own particular charge; much with respect to neigboring settlements; and not only of the present but future generations. If you sow the good seed of the word, the good effects of it will doubtless appear, not only among your own people, but those of other settlements in the vicinity; and those effects may extend themselves to generations yet unborn. But if you sow tares, the consequence may be ruin not only to many individuals, but to that new country in general, and that ruin may reach to the latest posterity.

By your situation you have an opportunity not only of building up your own church on the true plan of the gospel, but of forming other churches all around you. That new country, like a child or youth, may be compared to a tender twig, capable of being bent into any form. It is your part to form it. Take heed how you form it. Take heed what sentiments you preach, what practice and what discipline you introduce. Beware of receding from the truth in any of these. It is much more easy to begin right, than to correct an error; it is much more easy to relax, than to tighten the bands once relaxed.

You will have great opportunity of doing good not only by forming churches, but by introducing ministers. Take care what ministers or candidates for the ministry you introduce. Recommend no man suddenly; "lay hands suddenly on no man." Encourage neighboring settlements to form themselves into churches and societies, and to settle ministers, and that seasonably, before they shall have grown lax and shall have lost the good habits in which they have been educated. For this purpose cultivate an acquaintance with them; and by every christian and ministerial kind office in your power deserve their friendship and their confidence.

Very few ministers in the United States are placed in a sphere of so great usefulness, as that in which you are placed; few are called to such strenuous exertions. Let this not discourage but animate you. Such a situation is a talent for which you are accountable, and which you are obligated faithfully to improve. "Occupy till your Lord shall come." Some of the good consequences of the faithful discharge of your duty have been already mentioned. Consider on the other hand the consequences of your unfaithfulness; the consequence even in this life to yourself, to your reputation and to your own feelings, especially unless your conscience shall be stupid; consider the consequence to your friends and to all who wish well for Zion, what pain your unfaithfulness must give them, and among others, to us who set you apart to this solemn work. But especially consider the eternal consequences to yourself and to the people of your charge, and how you will be able to appear before your master and judge and render an account of your stewardship. Let all these considerations unite to make you faithful unto death; and then when the chief shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.

II. I am to address myself to the representatives of the church and society of *Whitestown*, to whom I shall speak, as if they were the whole body which they represent.

Dear Christian Brethren,—We congratulate you on this solemn and joyful occasion. You are the first of all that new country, who have formed yourselves into a regular church and society. In so doing you have shown a becoming attention and zeal for religion. It appears that you have not forgotten the good old paths, in which from your youth you have been taught to walk. Some are no sooner settled in the wilderness, than they lay aside all public and social worship and all religion. Your conduct is a proper and beautiful contrast to theirs. You have seasonably exerted yourselves to establish religion among you.

This is much to your honor. You will have the praise of it from men; and no doubt your conduct is approved by God according to the sincerity of your motives. You have exhibited a proper example to others. May they be provoked to emulation, and follow your good example, as you have followed the precepts of Christ.

Brethren, hitherto you have run well; let no man hinder you in future. The race is not ended; it is but just begun. What will signify all your attention and exertion to settle a minister, if you shall not hear and comply with the gospel which he shall preach?

You have heard the word of exhortation to him faithfully to sow the good seed of the word. Be you ready to receive it. Be you like the good ground which brought forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold. "Hear and your souls shall live, and God will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David."

You have heard the exhortation to your pastor elect, to give himself wholly to the ministry. His compliance with this exhortation will depend much on you. If you shall provide for his comfortable support, and then he shall not be faithful in his studies and ministerial labors; you will have discharged your duty and delivered your own souls; and you will thus render him inexcusable in his neglect. In this case all friends to religion will join in justifying you and condemning him. Nay, they would justify you in seeking a dissolution of your connection with such an unfaithful pastor.

But if on the other hand, through an ill applied parsimony, you shall withhold from him a comfortable support; you will necessitate him either to leave you and go to others who shall be more disposed to receive and support the gospel, or to neglect his proper work as a minister, in order to provide for himself and his household. The consequence will be, that he will not be able to preach to your edification, by bringing out of his treasures things new and old. Now what an ill judged parsimony is this! to save a small pittance of your property, and starve your souls!

I plead not, that you make him rich; but I do plead, that you support him, to the end that he may apply himself wholly to his ministerial work, for your benefit and your honor. It will be an honor to you to have a good, able, instructive, edifying minister, a man of distinction for knowledge in divinity and for learning in general; and one who shall be discerned to be such wherever he preaches. Now, give your pastor a comfortable support; and

we hope he will be such a minister. On the other hand, you will be ashamed to have it thought, and that by good judges, that your minister is a poor preacher; that his sermons are dry, barren, uninstructive, and that little or no good is to be obtained from them. But if you shall withhold his support, you will put yourselves in the most direct course to have such a minister.

As you are the first church formed and established in those new settlements, much depends on you as to other churches. It will be in your power to set an example of strict or lax sentiments, discipline and practice, and to introduce customs and establish precedents, which may last for ages. Therefore take good heed to your conduct, both as individual christians, and as a church; and "walk circumspectly not as fools but as wise."

Beware of several things in particular.

1. Beware of a lax observance of the christian sabbath. From some circumstances, which I need not mention, you will be under strong temptation to this. Therefore be careful both yourselves to avoid, and to restrain your children and domestics from every thing inconsistent with the strict observance of that holy day.

2. Beware of the neglect of public worship. The same circumstances which will tempt you to profane the sabbath, will in like manner tempt you to be negligent of public worship. Let me entreat you to be on your guard against their influence.

3. Beware of the neglect of family worship. Resolve with Joshua, that as for you and your houses, you will serve the Lord. And that you may induce every member of your households to serve the Lord personally, set them an example of serving him, in maintaining family worship, as well as in other ways.

4. Beware of the neglect of a religious education of your children. These hints admit of much enlargement, but the time is elapsed.

Be you, brethren, exemplary in these and all other christian duties. This will conduce much to your own peace, comfort and edification; to the comfort and encouragement of your minister; to your own honor, and to the glory of your Creator and Redeemer. Thus may you be a true and glorious church, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." "From you may the word of the Lord sound out" into all the adjacent parts, "and in every place may your faith to God-ward be spread abroad." May that whole country, which so lately was a "wilderness and a solitary place be glad for you; and may the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose."

"Now may the God of peace that brought again from the dead

our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. AMEN."

SERMON VII.

THE MARRIAGE OF A WIFE'S SISTER CONSIDERED.*

LEVITICUS 18: 16.—*Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness.*

SOME of this respectable auditory may be surprised to hear these words read, as a foundation for a discourse, on the present occasion. For the information and relief of such, it is proper to be mentioned, that I am requested by the General Association, to deliver a discourse at this time, on the following question: "Whether it be lawful for a man to marry his former wife's sister."

In a discourse on this subject, my learned auditors will expect nothing of that kind of entertainment, which might be given in a discourse on some other subject. They will see, that I am shut out from all the flowers of rhetoric, all flights of imagination and all addresses to the passions. Yet our subject is truly interesting, because it is practical, not only as any man may have occasion to consider whether it be lawful for him to marry his wife's sister; but as we may all be called to consider the case and to act upon it too, with respect to a christian brother. If any of our christian brethren, the members of our churches, shall marry his wife's sister, it will affect us immediately, nor shall we be at liberty to act as indifferent spectators. Either we must justify the act, and continue him in our christian fellowship; and in this case we ought to have substantial reason for our conduct; or we must condemn it, must remonstrate against it, and as the case may be, must renounce christian fellowship with the offender. Thus every man, every professing christian, every church, and especially every minister of the gospel, is deeply interested in the question which is now to come under consideration. And much more so at the present day, than at any former period since the

* Preached in the chapel of Yale College, on the evening after the Commencement, Sept. 12, 1792; being the Anniversary *Concio ad Clerum*.—Published at New Haven.

settlement of this country; because at no former period have there been so many instances of such marriages. Nay, even the state itself is concerned in this question. If the marriage of a wife's sister be lawful, it is the duty of our legislators to repeal the existing law against it. If on the other hand, it be unlawful, if it be forbidden in the word of God, and at the same time be of a tendency manifestly hurtful to good morals and to good policy; no christian or wise legislator, viewing the matter in these lights, will lift his hand for the repeal of that law.

Thus, though the subject of our present discourse may appear, at first view, to be dry and uninteresting; yet in its consequences, and in its influence on human affairs, it is of vast importance and to a high degree interesting.

In this view, therefore, the preacher hopes for the candid and patient attention of this learned auditory, while, in compliance with the request of the General Association, he shall

I. Mention some arguments to show, that it is not lawful for a man to marry his former wife's sister.

II. Mention the objections to those arguments, and the answers which may be made to them.

I. *I am to mention some arguments to show the unlawfulness of marrying a former wife's sister.*

In this part of my discourse I must necessarily be very brief; because the subject is in its nature very limited.

1. The principal argument is drawn from our text itself, and from that parallel text in the twentieth chapter of this same book and the 21st verse. The words of the text are, "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness." The words of the 21st verse of the 20th chapter are, "And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing; he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless." In these texts there is a direct, positive and repeated prohibition of marriage between those who stand in the same relation to each other, as a man and his wife's sister. When a man marries his wife's sister, the same man marries two sisters. And when a man marries his brother's widow, the same woman marries two brothers. And as the relation between a man and his wife's sister is the same as between a woman and her husband's brother; it seems naturally to follow, that since it is unlawful for a man to marry his brother's wife, it is also unlawful for a woman to marry her sister's husband; or which is the same thing, for a man to marry his wife's sister. And it seems difficult to conceive a reason, why it is not as unlawful for a man to marry two sisters, as it is for a woman to marry two brothers.

This is the allowed manner of arguing with respect to all the other relations mentioned in these chapters. When marriage is forbidden between any two relatives, we argue that the prohibition extends to all those who stand in the same relation to each other. For instance, a man is forbidden to marry his son's daughter or his daughter's daughter. Therefore we infer, that a woman also is forbidden to marry her son's son, or her daughter's son, though it be not expressly mentioned; and so in all other instances.

2. Beside this argument from scripture, it is said, that *reason coincides* in this case with revelation. Some of the principal reasons, why the intermarriage of brothers and sisters, parents and children is forbidden, are, *first*, that if such marriages were indulged, friendly society and the kind offices, which are the natural consequence of affinity, would be more contracted, and families of opulence and honor would clan together and keep themselves much more separate from the rest of the community. Such clans would tend to excite jealousy in each other and in the citizens in general, and thus a foundation would be laid for civil alienations, discord, tumults and bloodshed. *Secondly*, That between near relations there are inconceivably more opportunities to carry on criminal conversation, than between other persons. For these two reasons, it is supposed, that it pleased God utterly to forbid all connections by marriage or by carnal intercourse, between near relations. But these reasons are as forcible against marrying a wife's sister as against most of the other marriages allowed on all hands to be forbidden in scripture.

I am not insensible, that there are several objections urged against this doctrine and particularly against the construction, which has been now given of those texts in the 18th and 20th chapters of Leviticus; and those objections require a particular and candid attention. Therefore we proceed now

II. *To consider those objections and the answers, which have been or may be made to them.*

1. It is objected, that the texts in the 18th and 20th chapters of Leviticus say nothing concerning a wife's sister, and that we have no right to extend their meaning beyond what they expressly mention; that Moses has expressly forbidden all that he meant to forbid, and has not left it to us to argue out from a parallelism of cases or similarity of relations, what he meant to forbid and what not; that since Moses has forbidden to marry a brother's wife, that is doubtless unlawful; but since he has not expressly forbidden to marry a wife's sister, that remains as lawful as any other marriage; and that all penal laws which concern life, limb

or the safety of the soul are to be taken according to the express letter of those laws. This is the objection; and the answer is, that if it prove anything, it proves too much, and so proves nothing. The principle on which the objection is built, is this, that whatever marriage is not *expressly* forbidden by Moses, he leaves open and free to all, and virtually declares it to be lawful, notwithstanding anything which he has said against the marriage of those who stand in the same relation. But this principle implies consequences, which none of those who urge the objection will avow. It implies, that it is lawful for a woman to marry her grandson, though it is expressly forbidden that a man marry his grand daughter; that it is lawful for a man to marry his mother's brother's wife, though he may not marry his father's brother's wife; that it is lawful for a woman to marry her father's sister's or mother's sister's husband, though it is not lawful for a man to marry his father's brother's wife; that it is lawful for a woman to marry her husband's grandson, though not for a man to marry his wife's grand daughter.

But since no man will allow, that the several marriages now mentioned are lawful, though not expressly forbidden by Moses; and since all allow, that they are virtually forbidden, inasmuch as marriage between those who stand in the same relation is expressly forbidden; therefore to be consistent, we must allow, that the marriage of a wife's sister is unlawful and is virtually forbidden, in that we are expressly forbidden to marry a brother's wife.

And the rule that all penal laws are to be construed literally fails in these and a thousand other instances. I shall mention one, the law against man-stealing in Ex. 21: 16, "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, shall surely be put to death." No one will say, that this, because it is a penal law, is to be taken literally to respect the stealing of a *man* only, and not to include the stealing of a *woman* or a *child*; that the stealing and selling of a man shall be punished with death, but the stealing and selling of a woman or a child shall expose to no punishment.

2. Another objection to what has been advanced on those texts of scripture, is, that they prohibit a certain connection with a brother's *wife*, but not the marriage of a brother's *widow*; that they mean to prevent adultery with a brother's wife; that this is the sense and drift of the chapters in general; that God not only forbade adultery in the seventh commandment, but in these chapters meant to give pointed cautions against adultery between those who are nearly related; that this must be the meaning of the 16th verse of the 18th chapter, is argued from this, that the naked-

ness of thy brother's wife is said to be thy *brother's* nakedness, which it is said implies, that he was yet alive; for if he were dead, it could not be said to be his nakedness.

To this it is answered, If these chapters in Leviticus prohibit adultery and fornication only, there is in all the scriptures no prohibition of incestuous marriages; nor are any marriages whatever incestuous in the estimate of scripture. For in no texts are they more plainly forbidden than in these chapters; and if these chapters be construed to mean adultery and fornication only, the like construction may, with at least as great plausibility, be put on every text relating to the subject in the whole bible; nor, upon the ground of this objection, shall we be able to prove from scripture, that it is unlawful for a man to marry his own sister, his own daughter or his own mother.

As to the plea that these texts mention a brother's *wife*, but not a brother's *widow;* and that therefore they do not prohibit the marriage of a brother's *widow;* on the ground of this plea, we have in these chapters and in all the scripture, no prohibition of marrying our father's widows, our uncle's widows, etc. The only prohibition is not to marry a father's *wife*, and an uncle's *wife*, and no mention is made, in this case, of a father's or uncle's *widow*.

Besides; in the language of the Old Testament, a *widow* is very commonly called a *wife*. Thus Judah after the death of his son *Er*, said to his second son *Onan*, "go in unto thy brother's *wife*, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother," Gen. 38: 8. "If brethren dwell together and one of them die and have no child, the *wife* of the dead shall not marry without, unto a stranger," Deut. 25: 5. "Thou must buy it also of *Ruth*, the Moabitess, the *wife* of *the dead*," Ruth 4: 5. "Moreover *Ruth*, the Moabitess, the *wife* of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife," verse 10.

As to the argument in favor of the construction which I now oppose, drawn from this, that the nakedness of thy brother's wife is said to be thy brother's nakedness; there is nothing peculiar in the expression as used with reference to a brother's wife. It is applied to several of the other relations mentioned in these chapters; as to thy father's wife, and her nakedness is said to be *thy father's* nakedness. Yet it is not hence argued to be lawful to marry a father's *widow*.

To enforce the objection now under consideration, it is further said, that to *uncover nakedness* is not the usual phrase to signify marriage or the free intercourse between married persons. However, the phrase seems to be of very general import, comprehend-

ing familiar commerce in general between those of opposite sexes, whether married or not. Therefore in the 20th chapter, which is manifestly a repetition of this, the phrase generally used instead of *uncovering nakedness*, is *lying with*. Thus it is said, "The man that *lieth with* his father's wife, hath *uncovered his father's nakedness*." "If a man *lie with* his daughter in law,"—"If a man *lie with* his uncle's wife," etc. Therefore *to uncover the nakedness* of a person and to *lie with* a person of the opposite sex, are manifestly, in the language of scripture, expressions of the same meaning. And *to lie with*, is in scripture as familiarly applied to the intercourse between married persons, as between others. See 2 Sam. 11: 11, "And *Uriah* said unto *David*, The ark and Israel and Judah abide in tents, and my lord *Joab* and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink and *to lie with my wife?*"

It is further to be observed, that in the 20th chapter what relates to a brother's wife is still differently expressed. See the 21st verse, "If a man *shall take* his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing." The word *take* here used is commonly used to express the receiving of a woman in marriage; as in the following passages; Gen. 34: 9, "And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and *take* our daughters unto you;" and verse 16, "Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will *take* your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people." Deut. 25: 5, "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die and have no child—her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and *take* her to him to wife." The word in the original in all these places is the same which is used in the 21st verse of the 20th chapter of Leviticus. And by these authorities it appears, that not only *to take to wife* signifies marriage, but absolutely *to take* a woman signifies the same.

Therefore *to take* a brother's wife is the proper expression to denote the contract of marriage with her. But we are as expressly forbidden *to take* a brother's wife, as we are *to uncover her nakedness*.

3. A further objection is, that this law in Leviticus is merely *ceremonial* or *peculiar* to the Israelitish polity, and has no more respect to us, than the laws forbidding the making of garments of diverse kinds of materials, and the sowing of a field with diverse kinds of seed.

Ans. 1. The prohibition of marrying a brother's wife no more appears to be merely ceremonial, than any of the other prohibitions in these chapters, and no reason can be given, why it should

be understood to be merely ceremonial, which will not hold good with respect to many of the others. Yet it will not be pretended that either all the other prohibitions in these chapters, or even those which respect persons between whom there is no relation by blood, are merely ceremonial, and of no obligation upon us. Thus this objection like most of the rest, if it proves anything, proves too much, and so proves nothing.

Ans. 2. After the enumeration of the various prohibited marriages, it is added, in the 24th and 25th verses of the 18th chapter, "Defile not you yourselves *in any* of these things; for *in all these* the nations are defiled which I cast out before you; and the land is defiled; therefore I do visit the iniquity upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants." And verse 27th, "For *all these abominations* have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled." The like words occur in the 23d verse of the 20th chapter, "And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you; for they committed *all these things*, and *therefore* I abhorred them." By all these incestuous marriages the Canaanites were defiled. But they were never under the ceremonial law. Therefore all these marriages were violations of the moral law; otherwise the Canaanites would not have been defiled by them. This I conceive determines these marriages to be not mere ceremonial sins.

That all the prohibitions in these chapters do not respect men in general, and that some of them are ceremonial, is argued from the 19th verse of the 18th chapter, "Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman, to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is apart for her uncleanness." But it is by no means agreed, that this prohibition is merely ceremonial. It is the general opinion of commentators, that it respects men in general, as may be seen in Pool's Synopsis, where the reasons also for their opinion may be seen. And it is said, that even the aborigines of this country cautiously abstain from women during their periodical indisposition.

But supposing this prohibition of the 19th verse just quoted merely ceremonial, it will not follow, that also the prohibition of the marriage in question is ceremonial. A variety of marriages of those who are akin by both consanguinity and affinity, are prohibited in these chapters. One of these prohibitions is said to be merely ceremonial; and the reason given for this conclusion is, that a certain other transaction, not a marriage, nor peculiar to those who are akin, is forbidden in the same chapter; and this last prohibition is now supposed to be ceremonial. But who does

not see, that this reasoning is very inconclusive? The reasoning is this: The prohibition of intercourse, at certain times, between persons of the different sexes, whether related or not, is a ceremonial prohibition; therefore the prohibition of the marriage of a brother's wife is a ceremonial prohibition.

Indeed if the prohibition of this intercourse be a ceremonial prohibition, it will follow, that the universal terms, *all these things*, and *all these abominations*, used in the 24th and 27th verses of the 18th chapter, do not mean an absolute and unlimited universality. But if this were granted, how would it appear, that they are to be so limited, as to exclude the marriage of a brother's wife? Surely some substantial reason should be given for this particular limitation, allowing at the same time, that the prohibitions of marriages in general in this chapter are not ceremonial.

4. There is no relation by blood between a man and his wife's sister; therefore it is said to be lawful for him to marry her. *Answer.* This objection takes it for granted, that it is lawful for any person to marry any other person with whom he has no relation by blood. If so, he may marry his brother's wife his father's wife, his uncle's wife, his wife's daughter, his son's wife, etc. all which marriages are expressly forbidden in these chapters in Leviticus. On the other hand, there is a real relation by blood between cousin germans; yet marriage between them is not forbidden. On the whole therefore, this objection supposes that the lawfulness or unlawfulness of particular marriages is not to be determined by the scriptures. The truth is, that without the scriptures we should know but very little concerning this subject, or with whom we might lawfully, and with whom we might not lawfully marry. We must therefore be guided in this, as well as in many other things, by the scriptures; and they forbid marriage not only between many who are related by blood; but between many who are not thus related, and between a man and his brother's wife, or his wife's sister, as well as others. And in consequence of the divine prohibition, marriages of the latter description are as really and totally unlawful as those of the former.

5. Another objection is, that to marry a brother's wife, and consequently a wife's sister, is not unlawful *per se*, or unlawful *in its own nature*; nor is there any *immorality* in it. For what is *immoral* and unlawful *per se*, can never be licensed even by God himself. God himself cannot overturn the foundations of morality and moral obligation. This would be for him to deny himself. But he has licensed, and in a certain case has expressly commanded the marrying of a brother's wife, as Deut. 25: 5, "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die and have no child;

the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her and take her to him to wife." Therefore the prohibitions of marrying a brother's wife in Lev. xviii. and xx, must be merely ceremonial and do not extend to us.

In answer to this it may be observed, that what is meant by *immoral* and unlawful *in its own nature*, or unlawful *per se*, needs to be explained. If by those phrases be meant an action which is in such a sense immoral and unlawful, that God cannot consistently with his holy perfections license it; it is granted that for a man to marry his wife's sister is not immoral or unlawful *per se*. But if by those expressions be meant an action, which without a divine license, and in the common course of providence, would be unlawful; then marriage with a wife's sister is *immoral* and unlawful *per se*; yet it may become lawful by a divine license or command.

I beg leave to ask the objector, Is it immoral for brothers and sisters to intermarry? Is it immoral for a holy prophet of God to marry a common prostitute? Is it immoral to offer human sacrifice? Is it immoral for one nation, which has received and is threatened with no injury from another, to make war on that other, to subdue, kill, enslave or exterminate the whole, men, women and children, and to possess their country? If these be immoral, as they doubtless are without a divine license, and in the common course of providence; then God may license what before such license was immoral, and may by license and command render that lawful and duty, which otherwise would have been unlawful, immoral and wicked.

God commanded the brothers and sisters of Adam's family to intermarry; yet all grant, that it is unlawful for brothers and sisters to intermarry in succeeding ages, without a divine command and under the ordinary dispensations of divine providence. And if such marriage may be rendered lawful by some extraordinary dispensation of providence, doubtless it may be rendered equally lawful by the express command of God. God commanded the prophet Hosea to marry a common prostitute; Hos. 1: 2, 3, "The Lord said to Hosea, Go take thee a wife of whoredoms—So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, which conceived and bare him a son." Though human sacrifices in general, and particularly the offering of our own children in sacrifice, is in ordinary cases grossly immoral; yet God licensed it, yea, by express command enjoined it upon Abraham, and thus made it not only lawful, but his indispensable duty, to offer up in sacrifice his only son Isaac.

If it be said in this case, that though God gave this command, yet he afterwards reversed it by the voice of the angel, so that Isaac was not really sacrificed; I answer, this alters not the case as to the present argument. For God can no more command actions, which were neither lawful before, nor are capable of being rendered lawful by such command, than he can continue to command them. For instance, he can no more command a man maliciously to blaspheme the holy name of God, than he can continue to command it. He can no more command a man to indulge malevolence toward his neighbor, than he can continue to command it.

God commanded the Israelites to extirpate the Canaanites, and utterly destroy them; as Deut. 7: 2, "And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them, thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them." Chap. 20: 16, "Of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save nothing alive that breatheth; but thou shalt utterly destroy them." Now it would doubtless be a very great immorality, if any nation without a divine command and warrant, should treat in this manner any other nation. And it would have been the same immorality in the Israelites themselves, if they had not had a divine warrant for their proceeding. But with this divine warrant and command, it not only became lawful for them, but became their indispensable duty. I might further adduce the instance of the destruction of the Amalekites by Saul, which you well remember.

By all these instances it appears, that what would otherwise be entirely unlawful, yet by a divine command may become both lawful and an absolute duty. So that though the marriage of a brother's wife be in itself as unlawful and immoral, as the marriage of an own sister, as the offering of human sacrifices, or as the total destruction of one nation by another, when the former hath given no provocation to the latter; yet God may license it, command it, and thus render it lawful and duty. Thus the objection against the immorality of marrying a brother's wife and a wife's sister falls to the ground.

The truth is, that God may license and command any action, which does not imply a wicked heart, and is not inconsistent with the good of the intelligent system. He who is the author of men's lives and to whom they have forfeited them, has a right to take them away at any time, and by any causes or means, as he shall see fit. He has a right to make any man the executioner of any other man, and may command him to put that other to

death. He hath a right to take any man's wife from him and give her to his brother, while her former husband is yet living; and certainly he has a right to do the same after he is dead. And the taking of her to wife by the second brother might be so far from implying a wicked heart or any wickedness at all, that it might be as sincere an act of virtue and piety, as the act of Abraham in offering up Isaac.

This whole objection depends on a false principle, which is this, that moral duty and obligation are always the same and absolutely invariable. But this principle is manifestly false, unless it be properly explained and limited. There are indeed some human actions, which are invariably obligatory and cannot become sinful. Such as sincere and supreme love to God, sincere benevolence to men, and all those external and internal actions, which necessarily imply these. On the other hand, there are some human actions which are invariably and necessarily sinful, and cannot become lawful in any case whatever, and which God himself cannot consistently with his own perfections license; such as enmity against God, malice toward men, supreme self-love, and all those actions external and internal which necessarily involve these.

But the marrying of a brother's wife, when commanded by God, no more necessarily involves enmity against God, malice toward men, or supreme self-love, than they were involved in Abraham's offering up Isaac.

With regard to the license and command of God to marry a brother's wife, in Deut. 25: 5, it is to be observed that it by no means repeals the general law against marrying a brother's wife delivered in Lev. xviii. and xx. It is a permission given in a particular case only, viz. when a man died childless. It is therefore a mere exception to the general law, and not a repeal of it. But an exception to a general rule always confirms the rule in all cases, beside that which is excepted. For instance, the exception made to the general law in Num. 27: 8, "And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter." This by no means implies that the inheritance was to pass to the daughter in general, or in any other case, than that which is here specified; but manifestly implies, that in all other cases, it was to pass to the son or sons. Just so as to the law under consideration. As the general law is, that a man shall not marry his brother's wife, the exception that if a man should die childless, his brother under that dispensation and in that nation, in which it was necessary to keep every family as far as might be from be-

coming extinct, should take his brother's wife and raise up seed to his brother, no more repeals the general law, than the exception with regard to the descent of estates before mentioned, repeals the general law on that head.

Perhaps it may be needless to add that as the necessity of keeping up every family distinct, which was the reason of the exception to the law against marrying a brother's wife, does not now exist among us Gentiles; so the exception itself does no longer exist, and the general law is left to operate in its utmost extent.

6. Another objection is, that there is in the 18th verse of the 18th chapter, an implicit permission to marry a wife's sister. "Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, besides the other in her life time." Though this forbids to marry a wife's sister during the life of the wife; yet it implicitly *gives a license* for such marriage after her death.

The first answer to this is, that this text cannot mean to prohibit the marrying of a wife's sister, during the life of the wife, and implicitly to permit such a marriage after the death of the wife; because this would be an implicit permission to marry any other woman during the life of the first wife. It is plain, that a prohibition to marry a wife's sister during the life of the first wife, is an implicit permission to marry any other woman during the life of the first wife, which is a permission and licensing of polygamy. Therefore, if this be the sense of the text in question, polygamy was lawful under the old testament. Yet it is plain by the prophet Malachi, by our Lord, and by the apostle Paul, that polygamy was unlawful under the old testament. The passage in Malachi to which I refer, is chap. 2: 13—16, "He regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously. Yet she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did he not make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." In this passage all are forbidden to deal treacherously with the wives of their youth. And what was meant by dealing treacherously with them, is explained in these words, "And did he not make *one*? i. e. one woman for one man. "Yet he had the residue of the spirit," and was abundantly able to have created more women for one man, if it had been lawful and best for him to have more. And "wherefore" did he make but "one" woman? "That he might seek a godly seed;" i. e. because monogamy, or the hav-

ing but one wife, is subservient to godliness, and polygamy is hurtful to it. Thus does this prophet clearly decide against the lawfulness of polygamy under the old testament.

The testimony of our Savior on this head is not less express and pertinent; it is in Matt. 19: 4—7, "Have you not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female? And said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh." They *twain*, not they *three or four*, were to be one flesh; and a man was to leave father and mother and cleave to his *wife*, not to his *wives*. And this was the design and institution of God *from the beginning*, under the *old* testament as well as the *new*.

The apostle Paul also quotes the same words from Gen. 2: 24, and construes them in the same sense, as you may see in Eph. 5: 31, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they *two* shall be one flesh."

Thus clearly it appears, that polygamy was unlawful even under the old testament, and consequently that there is no license for it given in Lev. 18: 18, as there is, if that text be understood to refer to a natural sister.

The second answer to this objection is, that from a careful attention to the original it does not appear, that by the word translated *sister* in this verse, is meant natural sister, but some reasons to the contrary may be given. The same Hebrew phrase, אִשָּׁה אֶל־אֲחֹתָהּ, here translated *a wife to her sister*, is found in eight other instances only in the whole Hebrew Bible; in none of which it is applied to a natural sister, but in every one of them, it is applied to inanimate substances. Thus it is used twice in Exod. 26: 3, "The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another, and other five curtains, shall be coupled one to another." The literal translation of the Hebrew is this, 'The five curtains shall be coupled *a woman to her sister*, and five curtains shall be coupled *a woman to her sister*." The same phrase occurs in the 5th verse of the same chapter; "That the loops may take hold one of another. The literal translation of the Hebrew is, "The loops receiving *a woman to her sister*." Again in the 6th verse; "And couple the curtains together;" in the Hebrew, "And couple the curtains *a woman to her sister*." So verse 17th; "Two tenons shall there be in one board set in order one against another;" in the Hebrew, "set in order *a woman to her sister*." Ezek. 1: 9, "Their wings were joined one to another;" in the Hebrew, "Their wings were joined *a woman to her sister*." Verse 23d of the same chapter, "And under the firmament were their wings straight, one toward another;" in the Hebrew,

"were straight *a woman to her sister.*" Chap. 3: 13, "I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures, that touched one another;" in the Hebrew, "that touched *a woman to her sister.*"

On the authority of Buxtorf's Concordance to the Hebrew Bible I assert, that these eight are the only instances of the use of this phrase in the whole Hebrew Bible, beside Lev. 18: 18. And since in all these it is applied to inanimate substances, which cannot in the literal sense be sisters to each other, I submit it to my learned auditors, how far this is an argument, that in our text too it does not mean a natural sister. If it shall be determined that in our text it does not mean a natural sister, the sense of the phrase will be the same which it bears in all other places, and the translation will also be the same; thus "a wife to another shalt thou not take, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, besides the other in her life time."

The reason assigned for the prohibition of this marriage, whatever it be, seems to extend equally to the marrying of any other woman as to the marrying of a wife's sister. The reason is, that it will be a source of vexation to the former wife. But it does not appear, that women in general would be more vexed, to have their own sister received to the same bed with themselves, than to have any other woman introduced to the same place.

7. It is said, that supposing the marriage of a wife's sister is forbidden in Lev. xviii. and xx; yet those are the laws of Moses only; and the *laws of Moses no more concern us*, than the laws of Solon or Lycurgus. *Answer.* The laws of Moses are the laws of God; and they respected either the Israelites only, or men in general. Now that the law against marrying a brother's wife and a wife's sister respects us and men in general, is a doctrine for which I contend, and the reasons in support of that doctrine have been given, and are submitted to my auditors. And to say that the laws of God respecting us and our conduct, no more concern us, than the laws of Solon and Lycurgus, must be very extraordinary in any who believe the divine existence.

8. It is pleaded, that the case of marrying a wife's sister is very *different* from that of marrying a brother's widow; that there are very few, if any, instances in which a man marries or wishes to marry his brother's widow. But the instances of men who marry or wish to marry their wives' sisters are very numerous; which shows, that the feelings of human nature are very different in the different cases; that the minds of men in general revolt from the idea of marrying a brother's widow, but not at all from the idea of marrying a wife's sister, and that therefore we cannot justly argue from the one of these cases to the other.

To this it may be answered, that it is no proper matter of wonder, that men do not so frequently marry or wish to marry, their brothers' widows, as their wives' sisters; for they do not so generally choose to marry any widows, as they do maidens. It may be presumed, that as many instances may be produced, in which men have wished to marry their brother's widows, as can be produced in which they have wished to marry their wives' sisters who were widows. If women were at liberty to make overtures toward marriage, we might expect as many instances of such overtures made to husbands' brothers as are now made to wives' sisters; which would show, that human nature no more revolts from the idea of marrying a brother's widow, than from that of marrying a wife's sister.

9. It is further pleaded, that since the violations of both the law of Moses and the law of the state, are become so frequent, and yet the offenders are not prosecuted; this shows, that the *general sense* of mankind is against the law and justifies the marriages. *Answer.* It is not allowed that this consequence follows from the premises. Other laws, which all allow to be good, are very frequently broken, and yet the offenders are, according to their number, much more rarely prosecuted, than the offenders against the law in question; for instance, the law against drunkenness. To commence prosecutor or complainer, is an invidious task, and therefore men will rarely undertake it, though they frequently see crimes committed, which they utterly abominate.

10. Another argument in favor of the marriage which I oppose, is that no person is so *suitable* to come into the place of a deceased wife, or is so likely to be kind to her motherless children, as her own sister. But if the word of God have forbidden this marriage, we are bound to obey that, rather than to act on our own ideas of suitableness in the case. This argument therefore, like several of the forementioned, takes for granted the main point in dispute, that this marriage is not forbidden in scripture. If it were ever so true, that the sister of a deceased wife is more likely, than any person not related, to take a kind care of the children of him who has lost his wife, this alone would not justify him in marrying that sister. For the man's own sister might be still more likely to take a kind care of his children. Yet it would not be hence inferred, that he has a right to marry his own sister. To reply, that this is forbidden in scripture, is to say no more than we say with regard to the marriage of a wife's sister. So that the whole question is not, who is most likely to be kind to the motherless children, but what is the law of God?

Besides; it is by no means a conceded point, that the sister of

a deceased woman, married to her husband, is more likely than another person to be kind to her children. It is said that orphans have been more frequently ill-treated and murdered by uncles and aunts, than by any other persons.

11. It is urged, That it is the design of these chapters in Leviticus to preserve the *natural dignity* of the several relations of mankind, and not to suffer such marriages to be contracted, as are inconsistent with the natural superiority which some persons have, in consequence of the relation in which they naturally stand to others. But there is no such natural superiority of a wife's sister, to her sister's husband. Therefore marriage between them is lawful. *Answer.* Neither is there any natural superiority of a brother's wife to her husband's brother. Yet her marriage with him is expressly forbidden. There is no more of a natural superiority in a father's brother's wife to her husband's nephew, than there is in a mother's brother's wife to *her* husband's nephew. Yet marriage in the former case is expressly forbidden, but not in the latter.

12. It is also objected, that the *Jewish Rabbies admit* the lawfulness of marrying a wife's sister. But who made them an authority? They have no further means to know what is lawful in this case, than we have. We have the scriptures as well as they. Besides; the Rabbies are those among the Jews who hold the obligation of their traditions, or oral law, those very traditions, which our Lord so severely condemned. But the Caraites, a sect of the Jews who hold the obligation of the written law only, in opposition to those vain and wicked traditions, deny the lawfulness of this marriage; as did also the ancient Grecians, Romans and Arabians.

13. In favor of repealing the law of the state against marrying a wife's sister it is urged, that since the marriage in question is *allowed* in the *neighboring states* the law of this state against it answers no good purpose. Whoever wishes to contract such a marriage, will go into one of the adjoining states and be married. But the main question is, whether the marriage in question be a lawful marriage; whether it be right in the sight of God, and be subservient to good morals and good policy. If not, however other states may countenance it, this state is by no means at liberty to do the same.

Equally trifling and more humiliating is it, to bring the repeal of the laws of the adjacent states against marrying a wife's sister, as an authority that we ought to do the same. If none of the good citizens of this state be capable of understanding and judging of this subject; it seems advisable and necessary to import

some men of understanding and learning, who shall be able to judge for us.

If after weighing the arguments in favor of the doctrine for which I plead, together with the objections and the answers to them, any should remain doubtful and undetermined concerning the question; it is certainly advisable to be on the safe side. A man commits no crime in marrying some other person beside his wife's sister; but whether he will not commit a real crime, a real violation of the divine law, in marrying his wife's sister, is at least a very disputable point. Prudence therefore plainly points out to him what part to act. And considering, that we are required to abstain from all appearance of evil, who can with a good conscience willingly go as near the verge of evil as possible, and yet not come within it? In another point of view is it expedient for a man to marry his wife's sister? By such a marriage he would deeply grieve and wound the most of his christian brethren. And willingly to do this, is to feel and to act very differently from the apostle Paul, who would not eat meat so long as the world should stand, if thereby he should offend his christian brethren.

Thus I have taken a brief survey of the subject assigned me by the General Association. And whether or not I have given satisfaction to my learned and respectable hearers, I hope they will with candor receive my well meant attempt.

I have briefly stated the evidence from scripture and reason, that the marriage in question is unlawful, and have carefully attended to the objections to the doctrine; and it is humbly conceived, that the result of our inquiry is, that this marriage is as plainly and fully forbidden by God, as several other marriages, which we all acknowledge to be forbidden; as the marriage of a grandson, the marriage of a mother's brother's wife, and the marriage of a husband's grandson, etc. To be consistent therefore we seem to be necessitated, either to hold that these marriages are not forbidden, or to acknowledge that the marriage of a wife's sister is forbidden.

In these times of revolution and innovation, some seem disposed to innovate in everything, religious and moral, as well as political; to throw by old practices and old opinions, without inquiring whether they be well or ill founded; and to change merely for the sake of change; or rather under the pretence of liberty, originality and improvement, to throw off all restraint in morals and religion. This surely cannot be reconciled with scripture or reason; with good sense or with common prudence.

Though some among other changes and revolutions are al-

ready prepared, and are endeavoring to effect one with respect to the subject which has now been under consideration; yet it is to be hoped, that our legislators, our churches, and the ministers of the gospel will not proceed to any innovation in this case, without proper deliberation; that they will carefully consult the voice of reason, and consider how far the general practice of marrying wives' sisters will conduce to the preservation of the purity of the morals of the people, how far it will extend or limit those social connections between different families, which cement society, promote improvement, friendship and kind offices among the different constituent parts of the community; how far it will tend to keep particular families by themselves, and unconnected with their fellow citizens, and how far this will tend to promote narrowness, selfishness, mutual jealousy and enmity among fellow citizens, and aristocracy and civil broils in the state.

The lower classes of mankind are naturally jealous and envious toward the great and affluent. But will not the practice of marrying wives' sisters naturally tend to keep the great and the affluent unconnected with the rest? And whether that especially in a republican government, like our own, can be subservient to the public good, and whether it will not naturally tend to aristocracy, I leave every one to determine.

But above all, it is to be hoped, that before any innovation is made in this matter, all concerned, and especially our legislators, our churches and the ministers, will carefully consult the voice of scripture, and the revealed will of God. To the law and to the testimony; if we speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in us. And if there it shall be found, that the marriage in question is by plain implication forbidden in the same manner as several other marriages, as the marriage of a grandson, the marriage of a mother's brother's wife, the marriage of a husband's grandson, etc. which we all acknowledge to be forbidden; the consequence is plain, that ministers, churches and all individual members of our churches are bound to unite their influence against a growing evil. Our legislators, also, are bound in their capacity to uphold the truth, and to be deaf to the frequent solicitations of innovators, praying for the repeal of a wholesome law of the state, founded on the word of God.

SERMON VIII.

FAITH AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE ILLUSTRATED.*

1 Timothy 1: 19.—*Holding faith and a good conscience.*

These words are closely connected in sense with the preceding, which are these: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou mightest war a good warfare." Then follows the text, "Holding faith and a good conscience." Timothy was a young man introduced into the ministry by Paul his spiritual father, who charged him, in the execution of his ministry, to war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience; to fight valiantly as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, having and retaining, under all trials and temptations, the true faith of the gospel, and a good conscience; which he could do in no other way, than by faithfully discharging the various duties of the ministry.

Our text therefore naturally suggests two subjects of inquiry.

I. What is the true faith of the gospel?

II. What is to be done by a minister of the gospel that he may hold a good conscience?

I. *What is the true faith of the gospel?*

By the true faith is intended that which is saving or justifying, or which is accounted for righteousness to all those who are the subjects of it. It is a matter of great importance that we have just ideas of that faith, which is the necessary prerequisite and absolute condition of our justification. I hope therefore this numerous auditory will afford their patient attention, while we endeavor to investigate the nature of this cardinal christian grace.

It is manifest, that by justifying *faith*, the scripture always means such a faith as implies, or is certainly connected with, a compliance with the gospel. By compliance with the gospel I mean an obedience to the precepts of it, those which relate to the temper and affections of the heart, as well as those which relate

* Preached at the ordination of the Reverend William Brown, to the pastoral office of the first church in Glastenbury, on the 27th of June, 1792, and printed at the request of the hearers.

to the external actions of life. Those which relate to the affections of the heart, are those which require reconciliation to God, sincere and supreme love to Him, repentance of sin, reconciliation to the gospel, and especially to Christ, the great subject of the gospel, and sincere love to our fellow men. No man complies with the gospel, whatever his external conduct may be, without these gracious affections. And these will naturally lead to external compliance, both in a conscientious attendance on the institutions of divine worship, and in a conscientious observance of the duties of a strict morality, in justice, truth, fidelity and beneficence.

That by true and saving faith, the gospel means such a faith, as either implies in its very nature, or infers as a necessary consequence, such a compliance with the gospel as has been now described, is manifest from various considerations. Any other faith, than that which implies, or is connected with compliance with the gospel, is called a *dead* faith, and is condemned as not saving.

James 2: 14, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man have faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" Plainly importing, as you see, that a faith which does not imply, or is not connected with good works, is unprofitable and not saving. See also the 17th verse of the same chapter, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Obedience to the gospel is constantly spoken of as necessary to salvation, and those who disobey it are constantly said not to be entitled to salvation, but to be exposed to damnation. As Matt. 8: 26, Every one that heareth the sayings of Christ, and doeth them not, is likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand, and it fell with a great catastrophe. But he that heareth the sayings of Christ and doeth them, is likened to a wise man, that built upon a rock; so that his house stood, and he obtained the end of his labor in building it. James 1: 23, "If any man be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." John 8: 31, "If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed." Chap. 15: 14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Now he that has saving faith is blessed with a sure title to salvation. But no man is thus blessed, but he who continueth in the law of liberty and is a doer of the work which it prescribes. Therefore

between saving faith and the doing of this work, there is an established connection. Those who have saving faith, are Christ's real friends and his disciples indeed. But none are entitled to these characters, but those who continue in Christ's word and do whatsoever he hath commanded. Therefore saving faith and compliance with the gospel are infallibly connected.

The same truth appears from this, that love to God, love to Christ, repentance of sin, universal love to mankind, and love to the brethren are throughout the gospel, represented as absolutely necessary to salvation. Rom. 8: 7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." But "to be carnally minded is death;" and only "to be spiritually minded is life and peace;" "and they that are in the flesh, cannot please God." "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." John 2: 9, 10, "He that saith, he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light." Chap. 3: 14, 15, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren; he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1 Cor. 13: 1—4, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gifts of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have *all faith*, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity; I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity; it profiteth me nothing."

These are a few of the scriptural testimonies to the absolute necessity of cordial compliance with the gospel, in order to an inheritance of the saving blessings of it. But saving faith is absolutely connected with those blessings. It follows therefore, that saving or justifying faith either involves in its very nature, or is indissolubly connected with a cordial compliance with the gospel, in heart and life.

If this then be an established principle, our next inquiry will be, What kind of faith is that, which either involves, or is certainly connected with, a cordial compliance with the gospel.

To this inquiry I answer, that a mere intellectual, speculative or doctrinal assent to the gospel is not certainly connected with a cordial compliance with the gospel. This is evident from sev-

eral considerations. First, from this, that this kind of faith exists in perfection in the devils and damned. James 2: 19, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well; the devils also believe and tremble." If it be said, that we cannot argue from the case of the devils, as they are in a reprobate state, whereas we are in a state of probation; and though belief in the devils is not followed with reconciliation, it may be followed with that effect in us, who are in a state of probation; to this, I reply, that belief in the reprobate will produce all the effect, which it will produce in men who are in a state of probation, except that which arises from the prospect of the favor of God, and which is therefore the fruit of our natural self-love. But love to God and Christ from the motives of mere self-love, were it to ever so great a degree to follow from doctrinal faith, would be no true and saving compliance with the gospel. "If ye love those that love you, what thank have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" If ye follow Christ merely because of the loaves, how are ye better than the unbelieving Jews?

Besides, the very argument of the apostle James in the text just cited from him, is, that if we have no other faith than the devils have, we have no evidence of a title to salvation. It is as if the apostle had said, Thou believest, that there is one God; so far it is well; yet this is no proof that thy faith is saving; because the devils have the same faith, which is a full proof that thy faith is essentially defective. But on the principle of the objection, an answer to this reasoning of the apostle would have been at hand. The answer is this: but if the devils have the same faith which I have, this is no proof, but that my faith is genuine and saving. For they are not in a state of probation. Therefore that faith, which is not saving to them now, would be saving to them, were they in such a state as I am in; and it is no objection to the genuineness of my faith, or to its sure connection with salvation, that the devils have the same. Thus unless we allow, that the apostle under inspiration argues inconclusively; we must believe, that the faith of devils, or a merely speculative and doctrinal faith, has no certain connection with a real and saving compliance with the gospel.

If a merely speculative faith have a natural tendency to compliance with the gospel, or be certainly connected with compliance, what is the dead faith of which the scriptures speak? On this principle it will follow, that there is no such thing as a dead faith which is without saving profit; of which however the scripture makes express mention. If speculative faith be certainly connected with compliance with the gospel, all who have it will certainly be saved,

and it naturally tends to this compliance. And if it naturally tend to this compliance, it is a lively, operative faith, a faith which worketh by love. If so, what is a dead faith? If it should be said, that a speculative faith, in some low degree, is a dead faith; but in a higher degree, it worketh by love, the answer is easy; that if this be the general nature of a speculative faith, it will in all its various degrees more or less work by love. It will in its lowest degree have the same tendency in kind, as in its highest; and will actually be followed with something of the same effect; and that according to the degree of it; as genuine and sincere love to God, in its lowest exercises, tends to the proper effects of love, and actually produces those effects according to the measure of the love itself. Not even the lowest degree of this love can be called a dead love. So if the nature of speculative faith were of the like tendency to a compliance with the gospel, none of its exercises could be called a dead faith. If mere speculative faith, in which is involved no emotion of the heart or will, be the saving faith of the gospel, saving faith is not of a moral nature, the exercise of it is not a duty, and the omission of it or unbelief, is no sin; and it is as absurd to exhort a man to believe, as to exhort a blind man to see the sun; as absurd to threaten him for unbelief, as to threaten a deaf man for not hearing the sound of a trumpet; as absurd to praise and reward a man for believing, as to praise and reward him for feeling the warmth of a summer's day; and as absurd to blame and punish a man for unbelief, as to blame and punish an idiot for not seeing the truth of a mathematical theorem.

Yet nothing is plainer in the scripture, than that mankind are constantly exhorted to believe; are threatened for unbelief; are entitled by faith to the reward of eternal life; and unbelief is properly called the damning sin. These things it is conceived clearly demonstrate, that the saving faith of the gospel is a moral act, an exercise or emotion of the heart or will, and not of the intellect only.

If it should be still thought, that a speculative faith, if raised to a proper degree, will lead the subject to a cordial compliance with the gospel; without repeating what has been already said, that on that supposition it will according to the degree of it, have the same effect even in the smallest exercises; that faith is not a moral act, nor a proper matter of exhortation, command and reward; nor unbelief a proper matter of dehortation, threatening and punishment; it may be further observed, that on that supposition regeneration is no change in the heart or temper, but wholly a change in the intellect, or it consists in a new revelation; conse-

quently a man to whom that change or that revelation is not given, is no more blamable for not believing, than they to whom the sacraments of the New Testament have not been made known, are to be blamed for not observing them. The unbeliever in this case is the proper object of pity, but not of reprehension.

Further, the principle which I am opposing, implies, that the heart of man is not naturally depraved; because as soon as the increase of the capacity or the new revelation is given to the intellect, the heart immediately receives the truth and complies with it. The heart, therefore, is previously and naturally disposed aright, and so is not depraved; or at least not so depraved, but that as soon as the requisite increase of capacity or the revelation is given to the intellect, the heart immediately and readily complies; which is directly contrary to all that the scriptures teach us concerning the entire depravity of the human heart by nature.

If man, as soon as sufficient knowledge or light is communicated to him, cheerfully receive and comply with it, he is undoubtedly previously disposed to comply with it. And he that is disposed to comply with the light of truth, is not surely totally depraved, but has a heart friendly to the truth; and that is a good heart, and not a heart totally dead in trespasses and sins. He who is disposed to comply with the light of truth, as it appears, is already disposed to act according to the best of his knowledge; or, to express it in familiar language, he is disposed to do *as well as he knows how to do.* And what more can be required of any man than this? Such a man is so far from being totally depraved, as the scripture teaches us that mankind are by nature, that he is totally disposed to act and live aright; or in other words, he is totally sanctified; and he needs only to have the capacity and knowledge of an archangel, and he will be as holy.

These are some of the considerations, which seem to prove, that a mere speculative faith neither involves nor is certainly connected with a cordial compliance with the gospel, and therefore cannot be justifying and saving faith.

But if beside the assent of the understanding to the truth of the gospel, we take into our idea of faith the consent of the heart or will; such a faith does involve or is certainly connected with a cordial compliance with the gospel.

He who cordially consents to the scheme of the gospel, rejoices in it; and he who rejoices in that scheme rejoices in Jesus Christ, the great subject of the scheme. He who rejoices in Christ, will rejoice in God, and love him sincerely and supremely. He who loves God, will love his law, and love to obey it. He

who loves the law, will abhor every violation of it, his own violations of it in particular, and will repent in dust and ashes. He who loves God and is benevolently disposed to the interest of his kingdom, will be benevolent to all intelligent creatures, so far as is consistent with the prosperity of God's kingdom; and therefore will sincerely love his fellow men in general, and particularly those who appear to be friends to the same kingdom of God and to be the subjects of it. He who is the subject of these inward graces, will of course go into an external conduct correspondent to them. Thus will he who is the subject of that faith which contains a consent of heart, as well as an assent of the understanding to the truth, naturally and certainly yield a cordial compliance with the gospel.

This then must be that faith which the scriptures consider as justifying and saving; as they certainly do always consider saving faith as involving, or inferring as a certain consequence, a cordial compliance with the gospel.

Concerning this faith and the nature of it, several further inquiries occur, which I beg leave now to propose and consider.

1. It is inquired, Why is this complex exercise, implying both an assent of the understanding and a consent of the will, called by the name of *faith*? Or why must we understand the word faith which occurs so often in scripture, in this complex sense? Should we not rather understand it in the common sense of the word, as meaning a bare assent of the understanding to testimony? Why should we understand it in an unusual sense?

To all this I answer, that some of the reasons why we must in this sense understand the word *faith* so often repeated in scripture, have been already given, and they need not be repeated. It may however be further observed, that a bare assent to the gospel could not properly be made the condition of justification and salvation, as it does not at all prepare a man for heaven or for pardon, justification or any of the special blessings of the christian.

To be prepared for heaven a man ought to be of an holy heart; otherwise he cannot take pleasure in the displays of the divine holiness there exhibited; or in the holy inhabitants, or in the holy employments and holy pleasures of that holy world. To be prepared for a grateful acknowledgment of the infinite goodness and grace of God, in bestowing on him heaven, or pardon and his special favor here, a man must be fully sensible of his own unworthiness, demerit and sinfulness, must be a real penitent and in genuine repentance must comply with the gospel. There would manifestly be an impropriety in granting these bless-

ings to a man not duly sensible of the infinite grace of God in the bestowment of them, or of his own dependence on that grace. Therefore there is a sufficient reason why something further than mere speculative faith is made the condition of pardon and salvation. And since the scriptures use the word faith to express that complex condition of pardon, this is to be sure a sufficient reason why we also should use it in the same sense.

Every author has a perfect right to use words in his own sense, provided he does but explain or give notice of that sense. And since the writers of scripture have sufficiently shown us, that by faith they mean such a belief of the gospel, as is certainly connected with a compliance, and that this implies a cordial consent to the truth believed; therefore they have acted with no impropriety in using the word *faith* so as to include a cordial consent.

Nor is this a very uncommon use of the word. We often say, that a man does not believe a report or an information when he does not act agreeably to it. As if a man were informed that his house was on fire, and yet he should not exert himself to extinguish the flames or to escape; if a sick man were informed of a remedy for his disease of easy acquisition and sure or most probable success, and yet he should neglect it; if a child were taught by his parents a sure and feasible way to prosperity, honor and happiness in life, and the child in practice should wholly disregard it; we should naturally in all these and many other cases say, that these persons respectively did not believe the information given them. No wonder therefore, that the scriptures say concerning those who act not agreeably to the information given in the gospel, that they believe it not.

2. It is also inquired, Why did not the scripture make use of some other word of more determinate meaning, and which should without a particular explanation, express the complex act of the mind, which is the condition of justification? To this it may be answered, that there does not appear to be any word of more determinate signification, which could have been used in this case. Suppose the word *receive* had been substituted in lieu of *faith*, still we must have explained in what sense Christ or the gospel is to be received; whether with a mere speculative assent or with a cordial complacency; or if in complacency, whether that complacency must be directed immediately to Christ and the gospel themselves, or to the benefits merely, which we expect to derive from them. Or if the word *love* had been the word, there would have been the same ambiguity concerning the nature and ground of the love, as was just now mentioned concerning the word *receive*. If this act had been expressed by the word *trust*

still we should have had to inquire, in what sense we are to trust in Christ, whether as a sovereign, claiming and exercising the right to have mercy on whom he will have mercy and whom he will to harden; or whether we are to trust him in a belief, that we are the objects of his favor and not otherwise. Or if the word *obedience* or *compliance* had been chosen instead of faith; still there are different senses in which Christ may be obeyed, or the gospel complied with. This obedience may be external or internal; may proceed from the motive of mere self-love or from sincere and direct complacency in the truth.

3. Is justifying faith an *appropriating act?* And does the christian in faith believe, that Christ is *his* Savior, that he is converted and will be saved? If by *appropriation*, be meant choosing Christ as our Savior, wishing to be saved by and through him, and in no other way, entirely approving and acquiescing in the method of salvation proposed in the gospel, and hoping to be saved in this way; doubtless all this is or may be contained in justifying faith. From the view of Christ's sufficiency to save, the believer may hope that he may be saved by him, though he do not at present believe that he is interested in him. But if by *appropriation* be meant a belief that we are now interested in Christ, it is by no means an essential part of saving faith. Such an appropriation is not by any means necessarily connected with a cordial compliance with the gospel. A man may have, and many have had, this appropriation to a very high degree, and yet have lived in gross immorality. A man may have this appropriation, and yet not be pleased with the character of Christ only so far as he conceives or hopes, that he has derived, or is about to derive some benefit from him. He may still be greatly displeased with the holiness of Christ, and with his determination to punish sin and sinners continuing in sin. He may be displeased with the sovereignty of Christ and of his grace. He may be equally displeased with the gospel, the duties, the terms, and the conditions of it. He will therefore not receive either Christ or the gospel with any proper and direct complacency. In like manner he may be wholly without any compliance with the gospel in sincere and supreme love to God, in a cheerful submission to him and to his sovereign grace in sincere repentance of sin. Whatever repentance and love he has, may be wholly the fruit of self-love. So with respect to love to mankind and every other affection. Therefore as this appropriation is by no means certainly connected with a compliance with the gospel, it cannot be saving faith.

4. Does saving faith imply either a belief, that Christ died for him in particular, who is the subject of the faith, or a belief that

he died for all men in such a sense at least, that he has made atonement for all? It is said by some that there is no foundation for me to exercise faith in Christ, but one or other of these; a belief that Christ died for me in particular, and made atonement for my sins in particular; or a belief that he hath made sufficient atonement for all mankind; that if I believe that he died for me in particular, I have a foundation on which to trust in him. Or if I believe that he hath made an atonement sufficient for all men, I still have a foundation on which I may trust in him for salvation; but that beside these two there is no other foundation for faith or trust in him; that therefore all those who believe, that Christ hath made atonement for the sins of the elect only, must have the appropriating faith, or a faith which consists in believing that Christ died for them in particular.

Concerning all this I beg leave to observe, that if by saving faith we mean a trust or reliance on Christ in the persuasion, that he *will save us*, it must imply either a belief that he died for us in particular, or a belief that he died, and hath made atonement for all men. But if by saving faith we mean, as I conceive that we ought to mean, a firm belief of the report and doctrine of the gospel, and a firm belief of the character, offices, and sufficiency of Jesus Christ as a Savior, and a cordial complacency in him, and a willing acquiescence in the way of salvation through him; saving faith may exist in a man, who believes neither that Christ died for him in particular, nor that he has made atonement sufficient for all men.

5. Very similar to the last mentioned, is the following inquiry: Does the first exercise of saving faith imply a trust in Christ for salvation? The answer wholly depends on the meaning of the expression *trust in Christ for salvation*. If by that expression be meant a confidence that Christ will save us in particular; I answer, that this is not the first exercise of saving faith. But if by *trusting in Christ* be meant a belief that Christ is the only Savior; that he is all-sufficient as a Savior; that he is able to save us and all who believe in him; that we depend on him for salvation, if ever we are to be saved, and that we wish to be saved in no other way, entirely approving the way which is through him; as all this may be contained in the first act of saving faith, so trusting in Christ for salvation in this sense, is or may be the first act of faith.

6. Does saving faith *lead to a compliance* with the gospel? Is it the *cause* of that compliance which consists in sincere and supreme love to Christ, and to the Father, genuine repentance of sin, love of mankind, etc.? To this I answer, faith itself as it

has been now explained, is at least in part a compliance with the gospel. To receive Christ with cordial complacency, is so far to comply with the gospel. But this act is not the cause of itself. It contains in its nature sincere love to Christ and to the whole Deity; therefore it cannot be the cause of the first act of love to God or to Christ. So, as faith contains in its very nature the essence of a general compliance of heart with the gospel, it cannot be the cause of that compliance. To be the cause, it must be distinct from it, and so distinct from all cordial complacency in the gospel. But that faith which is distinct from complacency, is a mere speculative faith and therefore is not certainly connected with a saving compliance with the gospel. So that let our idea of faith be what it may, it is not the cause of compliance with the gospel. If faith imply a cordial consent to the truth, it cannot be the cause of compliance but involves it, so far as relates to the heart. If faith be a mere assent of the understanding, it cannot be the cause of compliance, as there is no certain connection between the one and the other. Speculative faith can work on those principles only, which are in the heart, but can never produce new principles or new tastes. Speculative faith concerning the utility of honey and its subserviency to health, will never produce a taste for honey in a man who has no taste for it. If a man had no sense of honor or of shame; no information and belief concerning the use and necessity of that principle so common to men, would produce it in him. Nor if a parent were without the principle of natural affection, would any speculative belief concerning it, or information concerning his child, produce the yearnings and desires of an affectionate parent. But wherever the principle exists, it is easy to excite its proper emotions.

So where a principle of benevolence to intelligent being, of love to God and to holiness exists, it is easy to draw it forth into its proper exercises. But where no such principle exists, it is impossible to create the principle or to excite the exercises of love to God and holiness by mere speculative faith.

Many sinners who have no doubt concerning the facts and doctrines of the gospel, yea, who have strong conviction of their own sin and danger in the view of those doctrines; yet pretend not to be, and in fact are not reconciled to the gospel, so as cordially to comply with it, and perhaps show this by their subsequent lives. Were it otherwise, did mere speculative faith communicate a new heart, there would be no need of the influence of the divine spirit, unless it were to increase the faculty of intellect or to impress or reveal a new idea in it, which would be to produce an effect not of a moral nature, for being without which

we are not blamable, and after becoming the subjects of which, we are no way morally better, than we were before. This would be not only regeneration by a physical operation, but it would be a regeneration, which would produce a physical effect, as much physical as would be the effect of changing the Ethiopian's skin or of adding a cubit to our stature. But this, as has been shown, is no change of heart; nor is it certainly connected with a change of heart; and if it were certainly connected with such a change, that change would be effected by mere moral suasion and not by any influence of the Spirit immediately on the heart or will. The increase of the faculty of intellect and the revelation or exhibition of any merely intellectual idea, can influence the heart by moral suasion only.

7. Does not justifying faith consist in a *sight* or *view* of the *spiritual glory of the gospel*, or in that assent to the divine original of the gospel, which immediately results from the view of its spiritual glory? And is not this view of spiritual glory or this spiritual light distinct from the exercise or complacency of the heart? Is it not antecedent to it and the immediate cause of it? This appears to be the idea of some; and they allow that this light is supernatural, and the effect of the immediate influence of the Spirit of God. To this I answer: If this light be distinct from all exercises of the heart, there is no morality, no grace, no religion in it, more than in seeing the light of the sun; nor are we while destitute of this spiritual light, more obligated to have it, than the blind man is to see the light of the sun; nor is he who has it, any more praiseworthy, than he who having his eyes open sees the light of the sun. In short, the observations in general, which have been made concerning mere speculative faith, are true with regard to this spiritual light, which is supposed to be without all exercise of heart, and therefore is in reality nothing else but speculative faith, or speculative knowledge. For what is speculative knowledge, but knowledge in the intellect merely, not involving any emotions of the heart or affections? And such this spiritual light, of which I am speaking, is supposed and described to be. As mere speculative faith cannot produce a new heart or holy love; so neither can spiritual light, if it be distinct from all emotion of heart, any more than speculation will produce natural affection or compassion, in him who is wholly destitute of the principles of those emotions. And if this spiritual light did produce holy love, it would produce it by mere moral suasion, as it could in no other way operate on the mind at all. This would exclude all influence of the Spirit *on the heart* in regeneration and whatever influence of the Spirit is admitted on this hypothesis, must

be on the *bare intellect*, in enlarging its capacity, or in communicating a new revelation.

If it be said, that there is no new capacity given to the mind, nor new revelation communicated, but a view of the beauty and glory of old truths long since known; still if this glory be discerned by mere intellect, as it is, provided it be distinct from all emotion of heart; why is it not as much a new revelation as if some new truth were made known?

I beg leave further to observe, that the sight or apprehension of beauty or glory of any kind, is not prior to the love of that beauty, nor is distinct from it. We do not first see the beauty of a picture or of a countenance, and then become pleased with it. But the very sight of the beauty carries in it complacency. Nor is there anything else in complacency in a beautiful picture than the sight of its beauty. So with regard to beauty and glory in general.

8. Is faith the *first* exercise of grace in the regenerate soul? *Answer.* If by faith we mean a mere speculative assent, it is neither the first nor the last exercise of grace, because it is no exercise of grace at all. It is no more an exercise of grace than the devils are the subjects of, while they believe and tremble. But if by faith we mean a *cordial* belief of the truth, implying a consent of the will to the gospel and complacency in Christ, this may or may not be the first exercise of grace. It implies regeneration and a new heart, or a new bias of the will. This new heart once given may exercise itself variously as objects are presented to view. Sometimes the first object coming into the view of the renewed soul may be Christ and his spiritual glory; of course the new creature will exert itself in love to him and in cordially receiving him in his glorious character as a Savior. In other instances, the Deity in general may be the first object occurring to the view of the regenerate soul. In this case the first exercise of grace will be love to God. In some instances sin may be the first object; then the first exercise of grace will be repentance. But the most natural order of the exercise of the several graces seems to be, love to God; submission to his law; and in view of the righteousness and amiableness of the law, an abhorrence and repentance of sin, which is the violation and practical contempt of the law; in abhorrence of sin and in a desire to be delivered from it and the consequences of it, an acceptance of Christ as the deliverer, or Savior.

Objection. How can we love God unless we believe in him? But to believe in God is faith; therefore faith is before love and the foundation of it.

Answer. We must distinguish between belief in general and faith in Christ as the Savior, which is justifying faith. It is undoubtedly true, that we cannot love God unless we believe that he exists. But a bare belief in the divine existence is not justifying faith. So that this objection proves not, that justifying faith is before any other exercise of grace. It only proves, that some belief concerning the object of any affection, is necessary to the exercise of that affection; which is not inconsistent with anything which has been advanced.

9. What is the *cause* of faith? Why does one man believe and not another?

Answer. The same as is the cause of any other grace. God changes the heart; then the man is prepared for the exercise of any grace, as truth and proper objects are presented; and for the exercise of faith as well as other graces. Thus faith is the gift of God.

10. Is faith a *duty* to which we are reasonably and morally *obligated?* It is said, that faith depends on evidence; that when evidence is presented, we must believe and cannot withhold our assent; but when it is not presented, we cannot believe; how then can faith be a matter of obligation?

Answer. If faith were a mere speculative assent of the intellect, this reasoning would be conclusive. In that case we should believe as evidence appeared, and could not, though ever so candid, believe without evidence. Nor should we be blamable unless evidence were shut out by our prejudice. But faith is a cordial belief of the truth. This depends not merely on real evidence, but on the temper of the heart. Therefore faith is as much a duty as love to God, love to Christ, repentance of sin, etc. and it is a duty for the same reason that either of those is a duty. And for the same reason unbelief is a great sin.

11. But how *can* it be the duty of a man to believe, when he is dependent on God for faith and faith is his gift?

Answer. Doubtless it is the gift of God in the same sense as any grace is. Still it is a duty. So love to God; repentance of sin; love to mankind; the true and sincere practice of justice, truth and beneficence, are all his gifts. Yet all these are duties of indispensable obligation. Just so is faith in Christ.

If we be not in duty obligated to the exercise and practice of the several forementioned graces and virtues; we are not obligated to anything, but what is agreeable to our own corrupt principles and biases; which is absurd and what no man will avow or vindicate.

The objection which we are considering is built on the ground,

that nothing is our duty, with respect to which we are dependent on God. But if this be true, nothing at all is our duty, as we are dependent with respect to everything, and are independent in nothing. The saints are dependent on God for grace to enable them to persevere and to make proficiency in christian grace; and all men, as they live and move and have their being in God, are dependent on him for power to perform the most common actions of life. Yet no man will pretend, that saints are not indispensably obligated to persevere and to grow in grace; or that any man is not obligated to live in the practice of kindness and good neighborhood to all around him.

12. But how is a man in duty *bound to believe*, when God hath not decreed that he shall believe, but has decreed to leave him without the gift of faith?

Answer. Notwithstanding any divine decree, it is our duty to believe for the same reason as it is our duty to do anything else, which God has not decreed to give us an inclination to do; for instance to read the scriptures, to pray, to worship God in any form, to pay our just debts, to speak the truth, etc. If any man neglect any of these duties, this very neglect proves, that God did not decree to influence him to perform the duty neglected, but did decree to permit the neglect of it. "For God decrees whatsoever cometh to pass." Yet no man will hence argue, that the man who neglects those duties, commits no sin in that neglect.

It was the indispensable duty of Joseph's brethren to love and to treat him with brotherly kindness. Yet they hated him, conspired against him and sold him into Egypt. And it appears by the event, that all this was agreeable to the divine decree; nor did this decree in the least dissolve their obligation to him. It was the duty of Judas to have loved, reverenced and cleaved to his Lord. Yet he hated and betrayed him, and this is proved both by the event, and by the express declaration of scripture, to be agreeable to the divine decree. But this decree did not in the least release Judas from his obligation to his Lord.

God's decrees are not the rule of our duty; if they were, we could not know the rule of our duty before we acted, unless there were a prophecy of the event; and it would be impossible, that there should be any sin in the universe, as God decrees whatsoever comes to pass.

13. But does not this doctrine, that faith is a duty, *favor self-righteousness?* Does it not afford some ground of self-applause to the sinner, to think that he is justified by faith; that faith is a duty, a good work, an amiable christian grace; and that therefore, he is justified by his good work, by doing his duty in part

at least? *Answer.* If by "justification by good works" be meant justification before and without all good works or exercises of grace; no doubt every believer is justified by good works, and we are so far from denying or evading the charge, that we avow and defend it as evangelical truth. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Those therefore who have faith do please him. But they that are in the flesh cannot please him. Therefore in order to please God, we must not be in the flesh, but in the spirit, and must be sanctified and of course exercise the true grace of God. If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha, i. e. let him be under the curse, and therefore while without the love of Christ, he is under the curse; and of course cannot be in a state of justification. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." By this it appears, that while we walk after the flesh and until we begin to walk after the spirit, and to exercise the graces of the spirit, we are under condemnation. "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Therefore we can have no spiritual life or peace with God, and of course cannot be justified, till we are spiritually minded.

But if by justification by good works, be meant a justification which is obtained on the ground of any merit, satisfaction or atonement implied in our good work or made by it; this I utterly reprobate, and deny that it is implied in anything that has been said.

14. Does not this doctrine, that faith is the duty of all men, *overthrow* the doctrine of the *total depravity* of human nature. If the exercise of faith and other grace be the indispensable duty of all men, will it not follow, that there is some good principle in mankind; some principle from which the exercise of grace may flow? *Answer.* This by no means follows. Though it be the duty of all men to believe, they may not be disposed to do this duty. Though it is undoubtedly the duty of the saints to grow in grace, and to persevere in holiness to the end of life; yet without special grace they will not either persevere or grow in grace.

II. *We come now to consider, What is to be done by a minister of the gospel, that he may hold a good conscience?*

As I have enlarged so much on the first head of my discourse, I must not dwell on this, but in general very summarily observe; that he must be faithful to his own soul, and maintain the constant exercise of divine grace, and close converse with God; he must be faithful to his charge as a minister; faithful in his studies; in preaching the word; in his private dealings with the

souls of men, and that according to their characters, whether saints or sinners; whether in health or in sickness and on a dying bed; whether secure or awakened; whether moral or immoral. He must be faithful as a ruler in the house of God, and faithfully dispense the discipline which Christ has instituted; and must do it prudently, yet firmly; with entire benevolence, yet without favor or affection, or respect to the persons of men. He must not only conscientiously do what he believes himself bound to do; but he must take care to inform his conscience aright; for in this, as well as in all other cases, we are bound to judge according to truth; and we judge at our peril.

But passing by the many things which might be said under this head, I shall relieve your patience by proceeding immediately to close the discourse by an address,—1. To the pastor elect. 2. To the church and society in this town.

I. To the pastor elect.

My young friend and fellow-laborer,—As the true and saving faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is so cardinal a subject of the gospel, on which Christ and the apostles have so much insisted, I thought it not unsuitable to the present occasion, to bring it somewhat largely into view, to explain it according to my ability and to consider the principal difficulties which have been raised concerning it. After the example of your divine Lord, you are to preach, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." After the example of the apostles you are to preach, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "This is his commandment that ye believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." The nature of this faith I have attempted to explain. This is the faith which you are to preach. You are not only to preach the necessity of faith in general; but you are to explain the nature of true faith; you are to distinguish it from several things which are called faith; from a mere speculative faith; from an appropriating faith; from a mere confidence of our own good estate; from everything called by the name of faith which is not certainly connected with a compliance with the gospel. A mere speculative faith is no duty, and can with no propriety be made the matter of exhortation. Nor is the appropriating faith a duty, unless we have evidence of our interest in Christ. But what evidence of this can there be by any other medium, than that of sanctification? Point out in your sermons the danger of a false faith, and warn your people against delusion on

that head. The danger is great. Thousands have been deluded and thousands probably will be deluded in this particular. And perhaps as many have been and will be deluded by one as by the other of the kinds of false faith just mentioned.

If people have something more than a mere speculative faith, and together with their faith, have emotions of love; lead them to inquire of what kind their love is; whether it be selfish or benevolent and disinterested.

Together with this faith, preach those doctrines and those duties which are immediately connected with it; such as the new birth, conversion, repentance unto life, supreme love to God, real and direct benevolence to mankind, the divine efficacious grace and the sovereignty of it, the saints' perseverance, and endless rewards and punishments. Preach the dependence of man on God for faith as well as for grace in general; yet preach the *duty* of faith, even the duty of all men to whom the gospel is preached, to repent and believe the gospel, and that no man hath a right to procrastinate this duty at all. Preach also the fruits of faith, the external conduct naturally flowing from it, and the external marks of its genuineness.

Thus you will preach experimentally, practically, usefully, and with the divine blessing successfully. Thus having this faith in your own soul, and thus preaching it to others, you will comply with our text and "hold faith and a good conscience." Thus you will "be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up by the *words* of *faith* and of sound doctrine."

II. I shall in very few words address myself to the church and society in this town.

MEN, BRETHREN, AND FATHERS,—You also have heard what has been said concerning the distinguishing nature of saving faith. And if it be the duty of your pastor to preach this faith; it is your duty to exercise it, and to receive the truth, not only with a speculative assent, but with a cordial consent. Faith is a duty equally incumbent on you, as repentance, love to God, love to men, or any moral virtue. Therefore while any of you continue in unbelief you continue in sin; and you are to expect that your pastor acting faithfully will reprove you for this, as well as for any other sin of which you may be guilty; that he will do what in him lies to convince you of it; and that by a clear exhibition of the necessity of faith, of the reasonableness of it, of the requisition of it by God, of the awful consequences of unbelief, and of the blessed consequences of true faith, he will urge you to a compliance with the calls in the gospel, to the exercise of faith and that immediately without any further delay.

Labor to get right ideas of saving faith. Examine those which you may have hitherto entertained; examine whether they imply any more than a speculative assent; or at most an appropriation. As your pastor shall make these distinctions, apply them to yourselves in close examination. Take heed that you amuse not yourselves with a false faith and false hope.

Just ideas of the true faith of Jesus Christ, and a careful examination of yourselves with respect to it, will happily, not only tend to preserve you from fatal delusion; but will tend to your growth in grace. The clear knowledge of the truth is the great means appointed by God of growth in grace. And the knowledge of the truth in such a capital article as that of the christian faith, is nearly connected with the knowledge of almost every important evangelical truth. It implies a knowledge of the gospel in general, and particularly a knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and therefore most directly tends to general christian edification.

We sincerely congratulate you on the events of this day; that with so much peace and unanimity you have obtained the resettlement of the gospel ministry among you.

Cultivate purity and peace among yourselves. "The wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable." And may there ever subsist the most cordial peace between you and your pastor. Such large societies as you are, are more apt *to fall out by the way*, than those which are smaller; and perhaps they are more apt to deviate from purity. Let me therefore beseech you to be on your guard in both these respects. Your pastor is young and comparatively inexperienced; therefore you are not to expect so much from him on that account. It will be your duty, in the arduous work to which he is called, to assist him by your prayers, by your kind advice, by your influence, and by all the ways in your power. Thus while he is laboring for your spiritual good, you will be laboring for the same important object.

Thus may you be long happy together, fellow-laborers, though in different capacities in the same common cause. And having happily and successfully united your labors here, may you in due time be received unitedly to partake of the blessed fruits of your respective labors, in the kingdom of perfect peace and glory, where you shall respectively "rest from your labors and your works shall follow you."

SERMON IX.

DEPRAVITY THE SOURCE OF INFIDELITY.*

JOHN 7: 17.—*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

OUR Lord "taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Even his enemies were compelled to admire his abilities and his doctrine. See the context: "Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" It was marvellous to them, that a man who had had no advantages of education, who was a carpenter's son, and was himself a carpenter, and of course could not have had much advantage of conversation with men of learning, even after he had arrived at mature age, should be able to teach so excellently, and to exhibit a system of morals and theology superior to all that had been taught, not only by the Scribes and Pharisees, but even by Moses and the prophets.

The solution which our Lord gave to their question, is, that he received his doctrine from God. He answered them, and said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." This being the fact, it was no wonder his doctrine was so excellent, and that he exhibited it in such an extraordinary manner. At the same time that our Lord thus professed to be a teacher sent from God, he informed them how they might know whether he were right in this pretension, viz. by a willingness to obey God. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," as I say; "or whether I speak of myself," as you imagine.

And doubtless what our Lord said on this head to the Jews, is equally true concerning us or any other men in these days. If any man be willing to do the will of God, if he be sincerely disposed to obedience, or to piety toward God and to true virtue toward men, he shall know whether the gospel be a revelation from God, or a mere human invention; and no man will be an

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infidel, unless he be of a depraved heart. This is manifestly the doctrine of our text; and to illustrate it I purpose,

I. To consider more particularly the import of these words, "If any man will do his will."

II. To consider the evidence of the consequence thence drawn, *That if any man be sincerely disposed to* piety and virtue, he shall know whether the gospel be indeed a revelation from God.

I. *I am to consider the import of these words, "If any man will do his will."*

It is manifest by the preceding verse, that the will of God is intended. The words immediately preceding are, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." Then follow the words of the text: "If any man will do his will," etc. that is, the will of the eternal Father, who sent Christ. Now to do his will is to be really and sincerely obedient to him, in the various duties of piety and true virtue. I say *sincerely* obedient; for no other obedience than that which is sincere, is worthy the name of obedience, or is considered as any obedience at all by him who looketh on the heart, and thus determines the actions and characters of men; and not as we do, by the mere outward appearance or verbal profession. That real and cordial sincerity of obedience is here intended, is evident, not only by the very nature of the case, as no other is any obedience at all; but by the form of expression in the original: ἐάν τις θέλῃ, *If any man be willing to do his will.* So that our Lord plainly meant a sincere and *willing* obedience, in which the *will* and heart are engaged, and not that which is external and visible only.

The parts of this obedience are two; the first respecting God, the second our fellow creatures. The first is piety or godliness, the other is morality. Godliness is compliance with the first and chief command of the divine law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind;" and from this supreme love to God, to attend on all ordinances of his worship. Therefore this attendance must not be rendered reluctantly, as if it were a burden, a task necessary indeed to be performed, but disagreeable and wearisome; but it must be rendered cheerfully and willingly, with satisfaction and delight. Indeed it will be rendered in this manner, if, according to the text, we be *willing* to do his will; or if we comply with the first and chief command before recited.

The other branch of obedience respects our fellow creatures, and includes all the duties of morality; as benevolence, justice, truth, faithfulness and beneficence. The foundation of all these duties is that cordial love or benevolence required in the follow-

ing divine command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" which our Lord tells us is the second, and like unto the first. All the forementioned duties of morality must be performed from the same *willing mind*, as the duties of piety. It is by no means enough, that they are performed externally from the motives of fear of human laws, judgments, and executions; or of shame, and regard to our reputation. They may be thus performed, and yet by no means be performed *willingly*, as our text requires; but with great reluctance, with no pleasure in the duties themselves, but with real disgust at them. Then only shall we perform them *willingly*, when we perform them from that love to our neighbor, which is correspondent to the love which we bear to ourselves. Then only shall we have a taste or relish for those virtues, or for the real beauty of them.

Thus we see what it is to be willing to do the will of God. It is to have a heart to the practice of sincere piety and true virtue; or in other words, to love God supremely, and mankind sincerely, or with direct and proper benevolence.

II. *I proceed to show, that he who is of this character, shall know whether the gospel be indeed a revelation from God.*

This I conceive to be evident by both scripture and reason.

1. By *scripture*. Our text seems to be very clear and pertinent to the present purpose. The question between our Savior and the Jews was, whether he were a teacher sent from God. He affirmed it; they denied it. And in the text he asserts, that if they had a heart to obey God, they would know whether his pretension were well founded, or whether his doctrine, which is the gospel, were really from God. This text alone, therefore, if there were no other text in the bible in favor of our doctrine, is a full proof of the truth of it. One divine assertion of any doctrine is a sufficient proof. If one be not sufficient, neither is any greater number.

But this is by no means the only text which supports this doctrine. The general current of scripture implies, and many particular texts expressly assert, that the blindness, darkness and unbelief of mankind are wholly of the moral kind, voluntary, and the result of depravity of heart. I shall mention some of them. John 5: 40, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." Ye *will* not; the original is more explicit and determinate, *οὐ θέλετε, ye are not willing* to come to me. But this unwillingness is assigned by our Lord as the reason of the unbelief of the Jews. And are we not to believe that unbelief in modern times proceeds from the same cause from which it proceeded anciently? 2 Thess. 2: 10, "Them that perish, because they re-

ceived not the LOVE of the truth, that they might be saved." In other passages the scripture abundantly teaches that they "who believe not, shall perish, shall be damned, are condemned already," etc. And this text assigns the reason why they perish; viz. that they have not *the* LOVE *of the truth.* But all who are cordially disposed to piety and virtue, or to real obedience to the will of God, do love the truth. Therefore they will not perish, but will believe the gospel and be saved. Again, ver. 12, "That they might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." This text shows, that no man will be damned, unless he have "pleasure in unrighteousness." But all unbelievers will be damned. The consequence is plain, that all unbelievers have pleasure in unrighteousness. The reason why the heathen world were given over to a reprobate mind, was, that "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge." And alienation is the only assignable reason, that "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." The apostle Peter assigns the same thing, as the reason of the unbelief of the scoffers, who should come in the last days, and should disbelieve the second coming of Christ, "saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" The reason which he assigns, is, a willing ignorance of the agency of God in creation and providence. But to be willingly ignorant of the most remarkable works of God, in which he has most remarkably exhibited himself and his infinitely glorious perfections, argues a spirit of impiety. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us of God." This text implies, that if we be under the government of a worldly spirit, we cannot know the gospel, and the truths it contains, and therefore cannot truly believe them. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." If therefore any have not the secret of the Lord, as no infidel has, it must be because he does not fear God. 1 John 2: 20, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things. But the anointing which ye have received, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." It is manifest, that this anointing or unction means some kind of instruction or teaching. But it cannot mean common instruction in doctrinal knowledge; because it is said that the former abides in those to whom it is given, and that they need not any further instruction, and that they who enjoy the instruction which is by this anointing, shall abide in Christ. But

none of these things can be truly said concerning mere common doctrinal instruction; nor concerning the miraculous teaching of inspiration, which was enjoyed in the days of the apostles. Judas was thus taught; yet he needed further teaching, and he did not abide in Christ. This anointing therefore must mean that teaching, which is by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. They who have this teaching, ***know all things***, therefore they will know whether the gospel be a divine revelation. And if any man know not this, it must be through the want of sanctification, or an obedient heart. "If ye continue in my word—ye shall know the truth." These words are of the same import with our text, and very similar in the form of expression. To continue in Christ's word, is to be obedient to him; and those who are so shall know the truth; of course they will know whether the gospel be true. "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." To be the sheep of Christ is to be obedient to his laws and commandments, as the flock is governed by the shepherd. And the reason why the Jews believed not the gospel, was, that they were not obedient to his laws. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments." ***Wisdom***, as the word is here used, always implies a belief of the scriptures. The same is observable of ***good understanding***. Those who reject the scriptures or the gospel, are so far from being ever in scripture represented to be possessed of wisdom, or a good understanding, that they are everywhere called fools, and are said to be ***blind, darkened, knowing nothing as they ought.*** All those therefore who possess wisdom or a good understanding, believe the scriptures. The source of this wisdom and belief is the fear of the Lord; and the source of infidelity must be the want of that fear. But ***that*** fear involves a spirit of true piety and virtue, and without it there can be no true piety or virtue. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness [*Πώρωσιν*, or as it is rendered in the margin ***hardness***, and might be more strictly rendered ***callousness***,] of their heart." The ignorance and unbelief therefore of mankind with respect to divine subjects are because of the hardness or depravity of their hearts. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them." Who the god of this world is, is manifest from John 12: 31, "Now is the judgment of this world; now is the prince of this world cast out;" and 14: 30, "The prince of this world cometh, and

hath nothing in me. Against the rulers of the darkness of this world." The god of this world then is Satan, the great enemy of mankind; and all to whom the gospel is hid, and all who believe it not, are under the influence of the god of this world, blinding their minds; and this blinding influence is the cause why they see not the light of the glorious gospel and believe it not. But this malicious being can have no such blinding influence on any man, only so far as he is depraved, and is under the influence of his depravity. Therefore the whole of that blindness, which induces or implies infidelity, is built on the foundation of depravity of heart. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." The light here intended is the light of the gospel; and the reason here given, why men did not love and receive this light, is, that their *deeds were evil*. "Wherefore it is contained in the scripture, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious; but unto them which be DISOBEDIENT, the stone which the builders disallowed the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient." Nothing is more evident, than, that disobedience is here represented to be the cause of stumbling at the word. 1 John 4: 6, "He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us." Hearing the apostles implies a belief of them. Therefore this text asserts, that he that knoweth God, believeth the apostolic doctrine; and that he that knoweth not God, and adhereth not to his cause, believeth not that doctrine; and the former is given as the reason of the latter.

Thus we see how clearly and abundantly the scriptures teach, that infidelity is the effect of a depraved heart and life, and that a spirit of real piety and virtue will forever prevent or abolish it. But

2. I am to consider how far the *voice of reason* coincides with the *voice of scripture*. If the gospel be a revelation from God, there is doubtless evidence of it. It would be absurd to imagine that God has taken care to give a revelation of his will to mankind, and yet has not taken care that there should be evidence sufficient to satisfy the rational, the attentive and candid, that it is indeed a revelation. A revelation so circumstanced could answer no purpose of a revelation, nor could it be reasonably expected that it should be received and regarded, at all, as a revelation. Nay, in fact it would be no revelation from God to man-

kind, because it would exhibit nothing as coming from God. If a kind prince should make known his will to his subjects, but in such a manner that there should be no credible evidence that it was his will, as they could not in this case know that it was his will, so they would be just as ignorant of what his will really was, as they were before, or as if the exhibition supposed had come from another prince, or from any other person. If therefore the gospel be from God, and were designed to be received as such, there is undoubtedly evidence that it is from God; such evidence as a rational, attentive and candid inquirer will see; and all who have a spirit of piety and true virtue will be candid and attentive to divine truth, and to everything which with any probability or plausibility claims to be divine truth; and their candor and attention will be proportioned to their piety and virtue. All such therefore will see the real evidence that the gospel is from God and will receive it accordingly. And if any see not that evidence, it must be owing to the want of candor and attention, and therefore to the want of piety and virtue.

If it should be said, a man may be induced by prepossession of education, by enthusiasm or blind zeal, to receive a false system for truth, contrary to evidence, or at least without evidence; and that in this case he is not governed by a peverse bias:—

I answer, nothing but some perverse bias, some party attachment, some criminal indolence or prepossession, can make a man so enthusiastic, so full of groundless zeal and so attached to the ways and habits of his education, as to be blinded to real evidence exhibited, or to imagine that he sees evidence which has no existence. Whence arises enthusiasm? Not surely from a principle of true virtue and piety. There will be perfect piety and virtue in heaven, but no enthusiasm, no visionaries. And doubtless if a man were completely sanctified in this world, it would preserve or deliver him from all enthusiasm. If so, then enthusiasm will, other things being the same, be diminished in any man in proportion to the degree of his virtue and piety. If honesty, virtue and piety would not preserve all men of common capacities from enthusiasm, then God has laid some men of common capacities under a necessity which depends not on their wills, but is a natural, evincible necessity, of rejecting true religion, and embracing enthusiasm. And then these consequences will follow; that they are under no obligation to be truly religious; that enthusiasm or false religion in them is no sin or fault; that true religion, as opposed to enthusiasm, is as to them no duty; and that enthusiasm in them is as true and genuine religion as any, and consequently is not enthusiasm. On the whole

therefore, we are obliged to come to this conclusion, that all religious enthusiasm, and all visionary schemes of religion, do and must arise from depravity.

Thus, the truth of our doctrine, that if any man be possessed of a proper spirit of piety and true virtue, he shall know whether the gospel be a revelation from God, or a mere human invention, appears not only to be confirmed by scripture, but necessarily to follow from the plainest dictates of reason and common sense.

If this doctrine be true, and if the gospel be a revelation from God, or a system of truth, all who believe it not are blinded by some perverse bias, or by a depraved heart, and they are not willing to do the will of God. No other reason can be assigned for their unbelief. They may be challenged to assign any other. On the other hand, if the gospel be not a revelation from God, as there neither is nor can be evidence, that it is from him; all who believe it as from him, are therein actuated by some perverse bias, or by an unwillingness to do the will of God. On this supposition all who have ever believed the gospel, the primitive Christians, the apostles, even Paul himself, who suffered the loss of all things that he might win Christ, either did not at all believe the gospel, and were the vilest impostors, or they believed the gospel from a spirit of disobedience to the divine will. Nay, the same is true of Jesus Christ himself. Either therefore Paul, Peter and John, nay, Jesus himself, if they were not designing impostors, believed as they did from a spirit of disobedience to the divine will; or from the same spirit Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke and Hume believed as they did. There is no medium in this case. And who, it is most likely, were influenced by a spirit of disobedience and impiety, let every one judge, who is acquainted with their respective writings. Let every such person judge, whether a spirit of obedience, or of piety and virtue, breathes most in the writings of Paul, Peter and John, and in the discourses of Jesus Christ; or in the writings of Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke and Hume. The first of these last mentioned authors holds, that ridicule is the test of truth. He ironically declares, "that when the supreme civil powers have given their sanction to a religious record or pious writ, it becomes immoral and profane in any one to deny or dispute the divine authority of the least line or syllable contained in it;" and represents the scripture doctrine of rewards and punishments as mean, selfish, mercenary, and hurtful to the interest of virtue. He applies his own avowed test of truth to the scripture, and endeavors to ridicule the spirit of prophecy; and explicitly accuses our Savior of being actuated by ambition and a persecuting spirit. He places the obligation to

virtue in its conduciveness to our present happiness; and seems to erect such a scheme of virtue as is independent of religion and destitute of proper regard to God. Bolingbroke denies a providence extending to individuals; holds that modesty and chastity have no foundation in nature, and are owing to human vanity; that man is no more than a superior animal, whose views are confined to this present life, and who has no reasonable prospect of existing in a future state; who is not accountable, and has no moral sense or feeling naturally implanted in him; and whose supreme end is his own pleasure in this life, etc. The other writer, Hume, denies that we can argue the existence of an intelligent cause of all things from the existence of the world; denies that we have any evidence of moral perfection in God, any evidence of a providence, or of a future state of rewards and punishment; reckons mortification, self-denial and humility among the monkish virtues, and pride among the real virtues; denies the distinction between natural endowments or talents, whether mental or corporeal, and moral virtues; and holds that mental capacity, strength of memory, wit, cleanliness and bodily strength are as real virtues as justice, chastity and benevolence. Now, I say let any man of tolerable understanding and candor judge, whether those who embraced and taught such theological and moral principles as these, were most likely to have been blinded to truth by a spirit of impiety and disobedience; or he who delivered the *Sermon on the Mount*, and those who wrote the *Gospels*, and other books of the *New Testament*.

I have now finished what was proposed from our text, and therefore shall close the discourse with some inferences.

1. Our subject teaches us, that if the gospel be true, there is no necessity that any man be an infidel. Infidelity is not necessary, but voluntary. Men are infidels, because they are willingly ignorant of the truth, and shut their eyes against it. Doubtless all depravity of heart is voluntary; and that, on the supposition that the gospel is true, is the real cause of all infidelity. This is indeed a doctrine grating to the pride of unbelievers; yet it is the doctrine of scripture, and the doctrine of reason too; nor, as has been asserted, can they themselves support any other theory with respect to this subject. They can, on the supposition now made, give no other account of their unbelief, which will bear examination. In vain will any of them pretend to be acted upon mechanically in this case; that what they see, they see, and cannot but see; and what they do not see, they cannot see, and therefore are not to be blamed; that men can no more think alike, than they can look alike. The truth is, that what they do not

see, as to this subject, they might and would see, were it not for the depravity of their hearts; and therefore for that blindness they are most justly to be blamed and condemned.

2. This subject teaches us, not only that no man is under a necessity to *disbelieve* christianity, but that no man is under a necessity to be in *doubt or uncertainty* whether christianity be true or false. There is a plain and sure way to the solution of all such doubts, and every man may in that way obtain a full satisfaction concerning the truth. If christianity be true, he may obtain full evidence of it; if it be false, he may obtain full evidence of that. All that is necessary to this, is, that he be *willing to do the will of God.* Therefore to be in a state of uncertainty in this case, to halt between two opinions, is utterly inexcusable; equally so as disobedience itself.

Yet is not this the case with many? They profess to be inquiring whether christianity be true or not. They are not satisfied; they want further time to weigh the evidence, the arguments in favor of christianity and the objections against it. But though such men may flatter themselves that they are acting a very rational and commendable part; the truth is, that they betray the wickedness of their hearts, and their unwillingness to do the will of God. For, as on the supposition that christianity is true, they who positively disbelieve its truth, hereby prove that they are under the influence of a disobedient spirit; so in the case which is now before us, they who are unsettled and halt between the truth and falsehood of christianity, prove that they are under the influence of the same spirit. Were they disposed to obedience, they would soon come to a determination, and see the evidence which exists, either that christianity is true, or that it is false.

3. Hence we see the reason why unbelief is every where in scripture represented as a sin, and is threatened with severe punishment; as it is in such passages as these: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already; because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the work of God, that ye believe on him, whom he hath sent. This is his commandment that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." So in numberless other texts. Now it hath been made an objection to christianity, that it requires mankind to believe it; that it constantly exhorts to faith as a duty, and dissuades from unbelief as a sin, and condemns it to the severest punishment. It hath been pleaded, that this is absurd;

equally so as to condemn and punish a man for not seeing the light of the sun; or as to exhort him to believe a theorem in geometry. But this is a gross misrepresentation, unless it be supposed that the man sees not the light of the sun and the truth of the geometrical theorem, because he voluntarily shuts or blinds his eyes against the former, and will not properly attend to the latter. The condemnation of sinners is, "that light is come into the world, and they love darkness rather than light;" and that "because their deeds are evil." Surely as a disobedient spirit is sin, and as such to be warned against; so is that unbelief which is the result of it. As an obedient spirit is a duty, and as such is with good reason to be inculcated; so is that faith which depends on it. As an unwillingness to do the will of God deserves punishment, if anything doth; so does that unbelief which is the effect of it. These observations are equally true, whether by faith we mean a belief of christianity, in opposition to deism; or that cordial receiving of Christ, to which the promise of salvation is made.

4. Hence also we learn the true source of all disputes concerning any of the essential doctrines of christianity. It must be some depraved principle. The same reasoning holds good here, as with regard to christianity itself. We can no more suppose that God would leave the essential doctrines of a revelation without evidence that they are really doctrines of truth, than that he would leave the revelation in general without such evidence. And if there be such evidence, not to see it must proceed from some depraved principle. No other cause of unbelief in this case can be assigned. I know it hath often been said to be owing to different modes of education, different instruction, associations of ideas and habits of thinking, etc. that some christians do not believe all the essential doctrines of christianity. But if any or all these causes influence them to reject any essential doctrine of christianity, of the truth of which there is real and sufficient evidence, they must still produce this effect by rendering them uncandid and inattentive to the evidence; and this want of candor and attention is depravity. If therefore we be duly attentive and candid, we shall see this evidence; shall be established in the belief of the doctrines, and shall surmount our doubts. If our hearts be not established by faith, but are driven about with every "wind of doctrine, and craftiness of men whereby they lie in wait to deceive," it must be owing to some want of attention or want of candor, or, in the language of the text, to unwillingness *to do the will of God*. And if all professed Christians were free from all depravity of heart, they would be agreed in all the essentials of christianity.

5. Let us adore the goodness of God, that he hath put the evidence of christianity and of the essential doctrines of it thus within the reach of every good man. This evidence is within the reach not only of the learned, but of the unlearned; not only of the wise and great men of this world, but of all who are willing to do the will of God. Therefore we have not to inquire, who shall ascend into heaven or descend into the deep, to bring us evidence of the truth of the gospel. But the evidence is nigh us, and will be received by all, if it be not shut out by the depravity of their hearts. For "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," or whether it be a mere human invention.

SERMON X.

GOD A REFUGE AND HELP.*

PSALM 46: 1.—*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

MAN is always dependent and therefore always wants help and strength. But he especially wants these in a time of trouble. A time of trouble is often, if not always a time of danger; and in danger we want a refuge, a place to which we may flee and be safe. Even in prosperity we are dependent, and want help, strength and refuge; but at such a time we are not apt to be so sensible of our wants. In trouble a sense of them is wont to be lively and strong, and to carry full conviction to the mind. Now our text informs us where we may obtain that strength and help, and where we may find that refuge, which is so necessary in trouble. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

As our text plainly implies, that we are liable to trouble, therefore I shall

I. Mention some of the troubles to which we are most liable.

II. Consider in what respects God is our refuge and strength.

III. Show that he is a *very present* help in trouble.

I. *I am to mention some of the troubles to which mankind are most liable.*

These are of several kinds.

1. We are liable to *personal troubles*, such as pain, sickness and death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And with death came all that train of evils which attend it and lead to it. We are liable to disappointments in our expectations; to disappointments in business; to losses of property; and to poverty with all its attendant evils. There is no dependence on any possessions in life. The most affluent often lose their property, and are reduced to the greatest want. We are

* Preached at the funeral of the Hon. Roger Sherman, senator of the United States of America, who died the 23d of July, 1793. Published at New Haven.

liable to the loss of our reputation, and this not only in consequence of ill conduct, but by the mere malice of others. Even the holy apostles and primitive christians could not be safe from the reproaches of their enemies. 1 Cor. 4: 12, 13, "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."

2. We are liable to *bereavement of our friends and relatives.* Our happiness in this world often very much depends on them. When they are taken away, we of course lose all that happiness which we derived from them. Besides, the loss of them is generally attended with a positive affliction which is peculiar and pungent. To separate some of the nearest connections of life is like separating soul and body, or tearing man from himself. Yet there is no discharge in this war.

3. We are liable to *public calamities*, such as drought, famine, wars, internal broils and commotions. Some of those calamities are severely felt at this very time, by several of the nations of the world. But happy are we that we are free from them. Another public calamity to which we and all men are liable, is the loss of wise and faithful magistrates. And this is a very great calamity. *A faithful man, who can find?* When we have found him and found him in the office of a principal magistrate, we ought highly to prize him, and when he is taken from us, to consider it as a great frown of divine providence.

4. We are liable to *spiritual troubles*, as well as temporal. As sinners, we are already the subjects of that which is the source of all other evils. And in consequence of sin and depravity in general we are liable to various temptations, temptations from our own corruptions, temptations from the world and from our grand adversary. We are liable to spiritual desertions, to the hiding of the light of God's countenance, to the just withholding of such measures of divine grace as we need for our christian comfort and edification; nay, to the accusations of a guilty conscience, to fear of divine wrath, to spiritual darkness and even to despondency. Also we are liable to trouble which respects the church of God in general. Is there a general opposition to the cause of Christ? a general persecution? or a perversion or rejection of his truth more or less general? These must affect every christian, and be a sore trial to him. In proportion as the cause of christianity is promoted and prospers, every real christian is happy; in proportion as it is opposed and obstructed, it is a trouble and an affliction to him.

These are some of the kinds of trouble both temporal and spi-

ritual, to which we are most liable. In these we need a refuge, we need strength and help; and our text directs us where we may find them. Therefore I am,

II. *To consider in what respect God is our refuge and strength.*

A refuge is a shelter from any danger or distress. A person exposed to an enemy may flee to a fortress. In this case the fortress is his refuge. Exposed to a storm he may flee to his house, and then he makes his house a refuge. Now God is a refuge or a defence to all who will flee to him, whatever their danger, distress or trouble be. He is their strength too. Those who are weak, need strength; those who are exposed, need a refuge. But we are both weak and exposed. As creatures we are weak originally and necessarily; and are rendered much more weak by sin and depravity. Also we are exposed to innumerable foes, and to be overwhelmed by innumerable evils. Therefore we need a refuge. But God offers himself to us both as our strength and refuge. In all our troubles and dangers we may safely apply to him, and if we apply sincerely, we shall find refuge and strength. He will protect us from all the evil which is not for our good, and will overrule that for our good, which he permits to come upon us. He will strengthen us by his grace immediately communicated. Thus he strengthened Paul under his trials, and assured him that his grace was sufficient for him; and through Christ strengthening him he could do all things.

Beside the immediate influence of the divine grace and spirit, God is also wont to strengthen by his truth.

Here it may be proper to inquire, what considerations or views of God and divine truth have a happy tendency to support and strengthen christians under the trials of life.

1. The consideration that *God reigns universally*, and that he orders all their afflictions, happily tends to support and strengthen them. His kingdom ruleth over all and his disposal extendeth to all events whatsoever; not only to those which we acknowledge to be important, such as the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires, etc.; but to those which we are apt to think are most unimportant and trifling. For the former depend on the latter. The selling of Joseph into Egypt, the consequent preservation of the family of Jacob and the fulfilment of God's covenant with Abraham, all depended on the seemingly trifling occurrences of a boy's dream, and of his father's making for him a coat of divers colors. And even the crucifixion of our Lord and the redemption of mankind depended on the giving of a sop to one of the disciples. Therefore there is no foundation, for the infidel objec-

tion to a universal providence, that some events are too small and trifling to be the objects of divine attention. The scriptures assure us, that though two sparrows are of such small value as to be sold for a farthing, yet not one of them falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father; and that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered by him.

Some readily grant a universal divine disposal as to natural events, but deny it with respect to the free actions of moral agents, as they imagine such a disposal to be inconsistent with the freedom of those actions. If the freedom of those actions consist in *contingence*, or in the circumstance that they are not caused by any thing external to the mind; undoubtedly a disposal of providence extending to those actions would be inconsistent with their freedom. But if the freedom of those actions consist in their *voluntariness*, and if a man be free to anything with respect to which he is not under either a compulsion or restraint to which his will on the whole is opposed, or may be supposed to be opposed; then there is not the least inconsistence between human liberty and a universal and overruling agency of God in all events whatsoever.

As God is perfect, all his works must be perfect, and his providence is directed by perfect wisdom and goodness. Therefore all that he does, or permits to take place, is, considered as a dispensation of providence, perfectly wise, just and good. The Judge of all the earth will and must do right. He cannot err. This under the greatest afflictions is a most strengthening and supporting consideration.

2. The consideration that *God requires submission and patience under all afflictions* is of the same happy tendency. As was observed under the preceding particular, the Judge of all the earth cannot do otherwise than right; therefore he requires nothing which is not right and reasonable. This requirement is not only authoritative and in that view must be complied with; but we ought to comply with it, in consideration of the reasonableness and fitness of it; so that in instances of affliction which are the most dark and mysterious, we may implicitly believe that submission and acquiescence are no more than our reasonable service, since God requires them. This consideration tends to strengthen against impatience and murmuring, and against fainting in the day of adversity.

3. That all our afflictions will subserve the *divine glory* and the *general good of the created system*, is also supporting and strengthening to every pious and benevolent mind. The declarative glory of God and the good of the created system mutually

imply each other and are one and the same thing. When good is promoted in the creation, God is glorified; and when God is glorified, good is promoted in the creation. But the greatest good of the created system no more implies the happiness of every individual, than the greatest good of the state implies the happiness of every citizen.

And as it was the original design of God to glorify himself and to promote the happiness of the creation, to the highest possible degree; so he hath chosen a plan or system of the universe, of all others in the best possible manner adapted to these ends. To imagine the contrary, would be an impeachment of his goodness, and would imply that he was, by some principle opposed to goodness, kept back from communicating that good, which he could easily have communicated.

I know it has been objected, that on the supposition, that God has adopted the best possible system of the universe, he hath exhausted his own infinite goodness; which it is said, is an absurdity, because infinite goodness is by the terms inexhaustible. But is infinite goodness any more inexhaustible, than any attribute of God? All his attributes are equally infinite, as his goodness; for instance his truth or his wisdom. Yet it will not be denied, that he exhausts his truth in all his communications with his creatures, and speaks as truly as it is possible for him to speak; or that he exhausts his wisdom in all his conduct, and acts as wisely as it is possible he should act. Therefore there is no absurdity in supposing, that God acted as wisely as it is possible he should act, in choosing this particular system of the universe, and that he exhausted his infinite wisdom in this, as well as in every other instance of his conduct. But how could he have acted in the wisest possible manner if he did not choose the best possible system? Does wisdom ever dictate anything inconsistent with goodness? or are infinite wisdom and infinite goodness opposed to each other?

If the system which God hath in fact adopted be the wisest and best possible, doubtless every part and every event in this system is in the best manner calculated to subserve the ends of infinite wisdom and goodness. Not that all things and events have this tendency in their own nature. No, many of them have a diametrically opposite tendency. Still under the overruling hand of God they are made to subserve the best purposes.

This then is one great comfort which the christian has under all his afflictions. Though he suffers, he suffers not in vain. His sufferings answer most important and benevolent purposes. God is thereby glorified and the happiness of the creation is pro-

moted. And nothing can be more comforting and supporting than this, to every benevolent soul.

4. The consideration that our afflictions will, unless we misimprove them, *subserve our own personal good too*, is of the same strengthening tendency. If we improve our afflictions aright, we shall be humbled under them, shall repent of our sins, which are the procuring cause of all divine chastisements, and shall give glory to God. And if we do thus, it will prove, that we are reconciled to God and are of those who love God. But we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Therefore their afflictions, as they respect them personally, are not in vain. Their present light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

In this view, how can they, even from regard to their own personal interest, wish their afflictions had not come upon them? Would they wish their final happiness to be diminished? Would they wish their own best interest to be in a less degree promoted?

Beside these general observations concerning all afflictions, there are particular considerations adapted to support under particular afflictions.

1. Under personal afflictions. If we be visited with sickness, God is able to heal us, and he will, if it be best; if it be most for his glory, and our good. Do we meet with losses? God who gave us all we have or ever have had, has a perfect right to take it all from us, and at such time and in such manner as he pleases. And if God deprive us of temporal good things, still he has provided for us eternal good things, even durable riches and righteousness; he offers these to us, freely, without money and without price. Though we suffer shame and obloquy here, we may inherit divine honors hereafter; we may be made kings and priests unto God, and inherit a crown of glory which shall not fade away. Though we lose our present lives, we may secure eternal life, a life of complete happiness and inconceivable glory.

2. Under bereavements he can more than make up the loss by his special grace. Also he can raise up other friends who shall be equally benevolent, as those whom he hath taken away. Or he can provide for us and protect us by his special providence. When father and mother forsake us, he can take us up. He styles himself "a father of the fatherless and a judge of widows." He can take care of them in every situation in life, and provide for them in all their variety of circumstances; he can make even their losses to work together for their good; so that while they are deprived of their dearest and most important friends and rela-

tives, they may be made rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. Thus all their afflictions may issue in their unspeakable gain.

Such losses teach those who are the subjects of them, to trust not in the creature, but in the Creator. They tend to draw off their affections from sublunary enjoyments and objects; to show them the vanity of all hopes from them and dependence on them; and to excite them to seek another and a better portion. Deprived of their parent, their friend, their guardian, they have strong motives set before them to seek a better friend, a more bountiful benefactor, a more able protector, and a more excellent father. When our friends or relatives are removed by death, it strongly reminds us of our own death. When they are gone into the eternal world, this naturally leads us to think more of that world, and to realize that we ourselves must shortly go thither, and that therefore we ought to prepare.

3. When we are under public frowns and calamities, we ought to remember, that God reigns over nations as well as over individuals; that we may as safely leave our national, as our private concerns with him; and that with respect to these and all other things we ought to make him our refuge and our strength.

4. Under spiritual troubles our obligation to have recourse to God for help is, if possible, still greater, than when we are under troubles of any other kind. For our dependence on him in this case is more immediate and more manifest than in any other. Who but he can heal the broken spirit, can forgive sins, can sanctify the soul or can save from eternal perdition? And he is abundantly and infinitely able and is ready to grant these spiritual and inestimable blessings to those who truly apply to him for them.

III. *It was proposed to show, that he is a very present help in trouble.*

He is always immediately present with us both as to time and place. We cannot escape from his presence. He therefore is always at hand to receive our applications, to hear our prayers, and to afford us help. This is certainly a very great advantage. Help at a very great distance either of time or place is not to be compared to that which is present. Before it shall arrive, we may be wholly overwhelmed and ruined.

Thus I have briefly considered the several subjects, which seemed naturally to arise from our text; I am now to apply these general observations to the present mournful occasion. The present is a time of trouble and affliction. The death of that eminent and excellent man, whose remains are now to be laid in the dust, is a source of affliction in several respects; it is so to his family, to all his friends, to the church of which he was a mem-

ber, to this city, to the State and to the United States. In this death they have all sustained a loss.

That we may rightly estimate this loss, and be properly humbled under the divine chastisement, let us take a brief survey of his life and character.

He was born at Newtown in Massachusetts, April 19, 1721. He was the son of Mr. William Sherman, the son of Joseph Sherman Esq., the son of Capt. John Sherman, who came from Dedham in England to Watertown in Massachusetts, about the year 1635. He was not favored with a public education or even with a private tutor. His superior improvements arose from his superior genius, from his thirst for knowledge and from his personal exertions and indefatigable industry in the pursuit of it.* By these he attained to a very considerable share of knowledge in general, particularly in his own native language, in logic, geography, mathematics, the general principles of philosophy, history, theology and above all in law and politics. These last were his favorite studies, and in these he excelled. If he in this manner attained to the same improvements and capacity of usefulness, to which others attain not without the greatest advantages of education, how far would he have outstripped them, had he been favored with their advantages?

His father died when he was but nineteen years old, and from that time the care of his mother, who lived to a great age, and the education of a numerous family of brothers and sisters, were devolved on him. In this part of his life filial piety to a parent at length worn out by age both as to body and mind; and fraternal affection to his brothers and sisters now in a good measure dependent on him, appeared in an unusual degree. Though cramped in his own education, he assisted by advancements of his own property, two of his brethren to a liberal education.

Before he was twenty-one, he made a public profession of religion, which he adorned through life.

He came to this then Colony of Connecticut and settled at New Milford in June, 1743, being then twenty-two years of age; and at the age of twenty-eight was married to Miss Elizabeth Hartwell of Stoughton in Massachusetts, by whom he had seven children, two of whom died young at New Milford, and two since he resided in this town. His wife died in October, 1760. At New Milford he was much respected by his fellow citizens

* Hence with great propriety the poet speaking of the declaration of independence by Congress, in which Mr. Sherman acted a distinguished part, says,

The self-taught Sherman urged his reasons clear.—*Humphreys' Poems.*

and much employed in public business. In 1745, within two years of his removal into the Colony, and when he was of the age of twenty-four, he was appointed a surveyor of lands for the county in which he resided; which is a proof of his early improvement in mathematical knowledge.

Although he was not educated a lawyer, yet by his abilities and application he had acquired such knowledge in the law, and such a reputation as a counsellor, that he was persuaded by his friends to come forward to the bar, and was accordingly admitted an attorney at law, in December, 1754. The next year he was appointed a justice of the peace and was chosen by the freemen of the town to represent them in the legislature, as he was generally thenceforward, during his continuance at New Milford. Also he sustained the office of a deacon in the church in that town.

He continued to practise the law with reputation, till May, 1759, when he was appointed a justice of the court of common pleas for the county.

He removed to this town in the year 1761. Having lost his wife, as was before observed, he was in May, 1763, married to Miss Rebecca Prescot of Danvers in Massachusetts, by whom he had eight children, seven of whom are now living.

After his removal to this town, he was made a justice of the peace for the county of New Haven, frequently representing the town in the legislature, and in 1765 was appointed one of the justices of the court of common pleas for this county. He was for many years the treasurer of the college in this city, and received an honorary degree of Master of Arts.

In 1766 he was by the voice of the freemen of the Colony at large, chosen an Assistant, and in the same year was appointed a Judge of the Superior Court. This last office he sustained for twenty-three years, and the office of an Assistant for nineteen years; after which the law was enacted rendering the two offices incompatible and he chose to continue in the office of a Judge.

He was a member of the first Congress in 1774; he was present and signed the glorious act of Independence in 1776; and invariably continued a member of Congress, from the first Congress till his death, whenever the law requiring a rotation in the representation admitted it.

In the time of the war he was a member of the Governor's Council of safety of this State.

About the close of the late war, the legislature of this State resolved, that the laws of the State should be revised and amended; and Mr. Sherman was one of a committee of two, to whom

this service was assigned; their proceedings being subject to correction by the legislature itself; and he performed this arduous service with great approbation.

In 1787 he was appointed by the State a delegate to the General Convention to form the federal constitution of the United States; and he acted a conspicuous part in that business. In the convention of this State to deliberate concerning that constitution, he had great influence toward the adoption of it by this State.

On the general adoption and ratification of the constitution, he was elected a representative of the State in Congress. As this office was incompatible with the office of a Judge, he then resigned the latter and sustained the former till the year 1791, at which time a vacancy for this State happening in the Senate of the United States, he was elected to fill it; and in this office he continued till his death.

On repeating thus briefly the history of this eminent and excellent man, it is worthy of remark, that though he sustained so many different offices in civil government, to all which he was promoted by the free election of his fellow citizens, and in most of which he could not, without a new election, continue longer than a year; and in the rest, except one, he could not, without a new election, continue longer than two, three or four years; and although for all these offices there were, as there always are in popular governments, many competitors at every election; yet our deceased friend was never removed from any one of them, but by promotion or by act of legislature requiring a rotation, or rendering the offices incompatible with each other. Nor with the restriction just mentioned, did he ever lose his election to any office, to which he had been once elected, excepting his election as a representative of the town in the legislature of the State; which office we all know, is almost constantly shifting. This shows to how great a degree and how invariably he possessed the confidence of his fellow citizens. They found by experience, that both his abilities and his integrity merited their confidence.

Beside this brief history, perhaps some further account of Mr. Sherman will on this occasion be expected.

I need not inform you, that his person was tall, unusually erect and well proportioned, and his countenance agreeable and manly. His abilities were remarkable, not brilliant, but solid, penetrating and capable of deep and long investigation. In such investigation he was greatly assisted by his patient and unremitting application and perseverance. While others weary of a short attention to business, were relaxing themselves in thoughtless inattention or dissipation, he was employed in prosecuting the same

business, either by revolving it in his mind and ripening his own thoughts upon it, or in conferring with others.

It has been observed, that he had a taste for general improvement and did actually improve himself in science in general. He could with reputation to himself and improvement to others converse on the most important subjects of theology. I confess myself to have been often entertained, and in the general course of my long and intimate acquaintance with him, to have been much improved by his observations on the principal subjects of doctrinal and practical divinity.

But his proper line was politics. For usefulness and excellence in this line, he was qualified not only by his acute discernment and sound judgment, but especially by his knowledge of human nature. He had a happy talent of judging what was feasible and what was not feasible, or what men would bear, and what they would not bear in government. And he had a rare talent of prudence, or of timing and adapting his measures to the attainment of his end. By this talent, by his perseverance and his indefatigable application, together with his general good sense and known integrity, he seldom failed of carrying any point in government which he undertook and which he esteemed important to the public good. His abilities and success as a politician were successively proved in the legislature of this State and in Congress; and his great and merited influence in both those bodies, has been, I believe, universally acknowledged.

As he was always industrious, he was always ready to discharge the various duties of his various offices. In the discharge of those duties, as well as in the more private offices of friendship, he was firm and might be depended on.

That he was generous and ready to communicate, I can testify from my own experience. He was ready to bear his part of the expense of those designs, public and private, which he esteemed useful; and he was given to hospitality.

As he was a professor of religion, so he was not ashamed to befriend it, to appear openly on the Lord's side, or to avow and defend the peculiar doctrines of grace. He was exemplary in attending all the institutions of the gospel, in the practice of virtue in general and in showing himself friendly to all good men. Therefore in his death, virtue, religion and good men have sustained the loss of a sincere, an able and a bold friend, a friend who was in an elevated situation, and who was therefore by his countenance and support able to afford them the more effectual aid.

In private life, though he was naturally reserved and of few words, yet in conversation on matters of importance, he was free

and communicative. With all his elevation and all his honors, he was not at all lifted up, but appeared perfectly unmoved.

In the private relations of husband, father, friend, etc. he was entirely kind, affectionate, faithful and constant.

In short, whether we consider him in public or private life; whether we consider him as a politician or a christian, he was a great and a good man. The words of David concerning Abner may with great truth be applied on this occasion: "Know ye not, that there is a great man fallen this day in Israel?"

To have sustained so many and so important public offices, and to have uniformly sustained them with honor and reputation; to have maintained an amiable character in every private relation; to have been an ornament to christianity and to have died in a good old age, in the full possession of all his honors, and of his powers both of body and mind, is a very rare attainment, and a very happy juncture of circumstances.

From this brief survey of the character of this our excellent friend, we see our loss and how great are the tokens of divine displeasure, which we suffer this day. The loss is great to our whole country, the United States, for he was still capable of eminent usefulness. It is great to this State; it is great to this city, of which he was the first magistrate; it is still greater to this church and society, of which he was so amiable, eminent and useful a member; but it is greatest of all to his family.

Yet there are not wanting motives of consolation in all these cases. God lives and reigns; let us make him our refuge and our strength, he is able to help us in all our trouble. He is able to take care of the United States, of this State, of this city, of this church and society and of the bereaved family. The direction of God himself is, "Leave your fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let your widows trust in me." The death of this our friend may be designed in mercy to his children; it may be designed to lead them to think more of death and the eternal world, and more of the necessity of preparation for death, and to excite them actually to prepare, by choosing God for their father and by making him their refuge and strength. Thus their present loss, though great, may be the happy means of their unspeakable gain. Also it may lead the widow to rely more on her Creator.

May not only the bereaved widow and children make such an improvement of this afflictive dispensation, but may we all do the same; that when death shall overtake us, as it will very soon, we may have God for our father and friend, to conduct us safe through the valley of the shadow of death and afterward to receive us to glory.

SERMON XI.

THE BELIEF OF CHRISTIANITY NECESSARY TO POLITICAL PROSPERITY.*

PSALM 144: 15.—*Yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.*

IN this passage of sacred scripture, that people is pronounced happy, whose God is the Lord. But what is the meaning of the expression, "whose God is the Lord?" or when may it be truly said, that the God of any people is the Lord? The answer is, when they believe, worship and obey the Lord or Jehovah, as the only true God, and that according to his revealed will. The Lord was the God of the Israelites, when they complied with the dispensation, under which they lived; and he is our God, when we cordially believe and comply with the gospel. If we do so, the text pronounces us happy; and it plainly implies, that we cannot be happy on any condition short of this.

Therefore the subject, which I beg leave to propose from our text for present consideration, is this,

The necessity of a belief of christianity by the citizens of this state, in order to our public and political prosperity.

This proposition is plainly implied in the text. For if that people only be happy or prosperous, whose God is the Lord; and if to believe and comply with christianity be implied in having the Lord for our God; it follows, that the belief of christianity by the citizens of this state, is necessary to our political prosperity.

Political prosperity requires the general practice of a strict morality. But this cannot be so well secured by any other means, as by a belief of christianity. Motives of a religious kind appear to be necessary to restrain men from vice and immorality. Civil pains and penalties alone are by no means sufficient to this end; nor are civil honors and rewards sufficient encouragements to the practice of virtue in general. The civil magistrate does

* Preached before his Excellency, Samuel Huntington, LL. D., Governor, and the honorable the General Assembly of the state of Connecticut, May 8th, 1794, and printed at their request.

not pretend to reward virtue in general according to its moral excellency. He does indeed reward some particular acts of virtue, which are highly beneficial to the public. But the many virtues of private life pass without any other reward from him than the bare protection, which is afforded in common to the persons who practise those virtues, and to all who are free from gross crimes.

Nor does the magistrate pretend to punish vice in general. He does undertake to punish those gross vices, which consist in the violations of the *perfect* rights of men, and in those cases only, in which the violations are both manifest and are manifestly proved before a proper tribunal. But all violations of even these rights which are perpetrated in private, or which, though perpetrated publicly, are not legally proved, pass entirely free from civil pains and penalties. The same is true of all violations of the *imperfect* rights, as they are called, which are violated by ingratitude, selfishness, neglect of kind offices, etc. Yet these vices are in their consequences, often as hurtful to the public good as injustice, fraud or robbery; and indeed the former are the source of the latter. Now to restrain from vices of this latter description, from all vices practised in private, and from vice in general, nothing is so useful as a full belief of a final judgment, and of a subsequent state of rewards and punishments, in which all sin not renounced by sincere repentance, shall be punished, and every man shall receive according to that which he does in the body, whether it be good or evil.

Let us suppose a citizen restrained from vice by the fear of civil penalties only. Such a person will feel himself under no obligation to pay either public or private debts, unless he expects legal judgment and execution; and under no obligation to speak the truth, unless he fears a prosecution for fraud or defamation. He will feel himself at liberty to live in idleness, profusion, intemperance and lust, and to take every advantage consistent with law, to defraud and oppress his fellow citizens. He will requite no kind offices, as he has no motive to gratitude. He will have no motive to the greater part of his duty to his own children, and in a thousand instances may neglect them, when he is bound by the strictest moral obligation, to assist and do them good. He may indulge himself in passion and ill nature, in contention and violence, so far as not to expose himself to the law; and of course will take no pains to preserve peace among his neighbors; but will rather, as his humor happens to be, foment by words and actions, animosities, law-suits and contentions in every form. Ever complaining under the mildest and justest government, he will in numberless ways oppose measures, and espe-

cially expenses, subservient and necessary to the public good; and will excite and spread discontent among others. Now is this a good citizen? What if the whole state consisted of such citizens? Could it enjoy political prosperity?

The best and perhaps the only remedy for such diseases, is a full belief of the divine universal providence, of the accountableness of all men to God for all their conduct, and of a future equal retribution.

Some religion then, and some belief of a future state is necessary to our political prosperity. But what religion shall we adopt? and what system concerning a future state is most useful to the state? It is not possible to introduce and give a general spread through the state, to Mohammedanism or paganism; and it would be a work of time and of great difficulty, to lead the citizens in general into the belief of deism or what is called the philosophical religion. Therefore we seem necessitated to have recourse to christianity; and this is most excellently adapted to the ends of restraining men from vice and promoting that general practice of strict morality, which is so essential to the political prosperity of any people. It is adapted to these ends by its precepts; by the moral character of the author of those precepts; by his absolute supremacy and sovereignty; by the motives of reward and punishment with which those precepts are enforced; by the facts which it relates, and by the examples which it exhibits. It is enforced not by the bare authority of our feeble reason, but by the authority of our Creator, our Judge, and our all-perfect God. It depends not on the obscure investigations, subtile refinements and uncertain conclusions of human intellect; but on the omniscience, the veracity, the justice, the goodness and the will of God. And thus it is excellently adapted to the principles and feelings which are common to human nature, and which exist in the weakest and most ignorant, as well as the most intelligent and learned. A man who cannot follow the shortest and most easy chain of reasoning on the nature of things and the tendency of human actions, and who will not from such reasoning feel his obligation to virtue in general or to particular virtues, will at once feel the force of the positive and authoritative declarations and requisitions of the Almighty; and where is the man, learned or unlearned, of weak or strong powers, who does not see and feel the difference between the advice and directions of some learned and acute philosopher, and *thus saith the Lord*? Above all, the motives arising from the doctrines of the final judgment and a future state, lay an inconceivably greater restraint on the depravity of human nature, than anything that is or can be suggested by the philosophical religion.

Let us compare this religion with christianity in a few particulars, which immediately relate to our present subject.

It is a maxim of infidelity to follow *nature*. Now to follow her, is to follow all the appetites and passions of which we are naturally the subjects; and this will lead to all kinds of vice. But it is a maxim of christianity, to follow the divine law, the precepts of the gospel and the example of Christ; and whether these lead to vice or virtue, I need not inform you.

Another maxim of infidelity is, that man was made for his own happiness; that is, that every man was made for his own individual happiness. This then is to be the supreme object of every man; and this object is to be pursued, as infidels themselves teach, by gratifying his natural appetites and passions, which brings us just where we were before, to all vice and wickedness. And if an infidel deny his appetites and passions, he must be governed by other motives than any which his system of morality suggests. But christianity teaches, that we were created for an end, which so far as we pursue, we cannot fail of sincere piety and strict morality.

Infidels are divided into two classes, those who deny a future state of existence, and those who allow such a state. The former deny all moral government of God, and that we are at all accountable to him; and some of the most noted among them deny any evidence of his moral perfections. Now it is manifest, that according to this system mankind can be under no restraint from vice, by the consideration of a future state of rewards and punishments, or by the consideration of their accountableness to God, or of his commands or prohibitions. Nor does this system admit of any motives derived from these sources, to the practice of virtue. Yet these motives, with respect to mankind in the gross, are the most powerful. The authors and abettors of this system seem to rely on *a sense of honor*, as the great motive to virtue and restraint from vice. And what is this *sense of honor*? If it be a sense of shame in doing wrong, and a sense of the honorableness of doing right, it is a mere sense or knowledge of right and wrong; and this so far as it is founded on truth, is undoubtedly a proper rule of conduct, and a man who is disposed to virtue, will practise according to this rule. But how are men in general, without the aid of revelation, to attain, in all cases, to the knowledge of right and wrong, of virtue and vice? It is manifest by abundant experience both ancient and modern, that mere human reason is insufficient for this.

If by this sense of honor be meant, as I imagine is generally meant, a sense of our own supposed personal dignity, a pride

naturally arising from this sense, and a disposition to resent and revenge everything which is grating to our pride; this in many cases is so far from a motive to virtue and restraint from vice, that it is itself a vice. Let this sense of honor be ever so well limited and explained, it cannot be a motive to virtue and a restraint from vice to all men; because it does not reach and cannot influence all men. How many are there in every nation and country, who have very little sense of their own dignity, and very little elevation of soul in a consciousness of it? How many are there, who in a prospect of gain, would not scruple to betray their friends, to steal their neighbor's property or to betray their country?

It is manifest therefore, that this philosophical religion, could it be generally introduced and established among us, would be a very great political evil, as it would weaken and even annihilate those motives to virtue and restraints from vice, which are most powerful on the minds of men in general.

Besides; this system so far as it denies the evidence of the moral perfections of God, not only cuts off the motives to virtue, drawn from a future state and from those divine perfections; but even suggests motives to vice. If it be a matter of uncertainty, whether God be a friend to virtue or a friend to vice, it may be, that we shall please him most by an unrestrained indulgence of vice, and by the practice of virtue shall provoke his malice and vengeance. Nay, if it be a matter of uncertainty, whether the Deity be a benevolent or malicious being, we can have no certainty, but that he will give us an existence in a future state, on purpose to gratify his malevolence in our everlasting torment. And to be consistent, the advocates for the system now under consideration should not say a word against the christian doctrine of endless punishment, on the ground of its supposed injustice or opposition to grace and mercy; because they acknowledge, that they know not, that God is just, gracious or merciful.

Thus this scheme, which was invented to avoid the fears of future punishment, defeats itself; and while it attempts to deliver us from a just punishment, leaves us exposed to any punishment ever so unjust, cruel and malicious.

As to that kind of infidelity, which allows the divine moral perfections and a future state of rewards and punishment; though this is more plausible than the former; yet the motives to virtue and restraints from vice, which it affords, are not to be compared with those of the gospel. Agreeably to the gospel all men are to be rewarded according to their works done in the body, whether they be good or evil. Some are to be beaten with few stripes,

some with many stripes, according to their several aggravations of guilt. But in the future punishment which infidels admit, there is nothing vindictive, nothing therefore which is intended to support law and government. The only punishment which they admit, is that which is designed for the good of the person punished;* and therefore as soon as the person punished repents, he is released. Now it is manifest on the slightest reflection, that the motive to avoid sin and vice on this plan, is exceedingly diminished from what it is on the plan of the gospel. On the plan of the gospel the motive is endless misery, proportioned in degree to the demerit of the person punished. On the infidel plan it is a merciful chastisement, which is to continue no longer than till the subject shall repent. And as every sinner will naturally flatter himself, that he shall repent as soon as he shall find his punishment to be intolerable; so all the punishment, which on this plan he will expect, is one that shall continue but for a moment, after it shall have become extreme or intolerable. And whether this momentary extreme punishment be an equal restraint on vice, as the endless misery threatened in the gospel, let every man judge. It is plain, that in a comparative view it is as nothing. Therefore as even this, the most plausible scheme of infidelity, cuts the sinews of morality and opens the flood-gates of vice; the prevalence of it in our state would be a very great political evil.

If we take the pains to compare christianity with ancient paganism, we shall find, that the former has, even in a political view, the like advantage over the latter, which it has over infidelity. If in the account, which I shall now give of the pagan religion, some things shall be mentioned, which will be grating to those of the most delicate feelings; I think I shall be entitled to the pardon of my hearers, as otherwise it will be impossible for me to do justice to this important subject.

Paganism, though it taught a future punishment of wicked men of certain descriptions; yet indulged and even encouraged vice in a variety of ways. It taught that there were many gods, some male and some female; some comparatively good, others exceedingly evil; but all and even the chief god, on many occasions, acting a most wicked part and indulging the vilest lusts. Some of their female deities were deceased women of most abandoned characters. Jupiter, whom they called *the father of gods and men*, was himself the son of Saturn who according to some, was king of Crete; according to others, was Ham, the son of Noah; according to others, was Adam; but on every hypothesis was a mere man. This man, the ancient heathens believed, had

* See Blount and Tyndal.

a number of children, and was wont to devour them as soon as they were born; but Jupiter was saved by an artifice of his mother. He, grown to maturity, rebelled against his father, who till then was supposed to be the supreme God, drove him from his throne, and seized his authority and dominions. When Jupiter had by these means raised himself to the place of supreme deity, he was wont to transform himself into various visible shapes, to facilitate his designs of criminal intercourse with women here on earth. Now how destructive of the interests of virtue and morality must necessarily have been these ideas of the gods; and especially these ideas of the character and conduct of the supreme god, *Jupiter the greatest and the best!*

In like manner destructive to morality must have been almost all their other ideas of their gods; as of their animosities and contentions among themselves; of their intrigues and lusts; and the vicious and most abominable practices by which, in many instances, they were worshipped. The goddess Venus was openly worshipped by whoredom;* and the feasts called Saturnalia and Bacchanalia were celebrated by the practice of every lewdness and debauchery. The vices of drunkenness and whoredom in these cases were accounted, instead of moral evils, the highest acts of virtue and piety.

Now as all these ideas and practices tended to a general depravity of morals; so their effects abundantly appeared in the vicious lives of the heathen world.

I am well aware, that it has been said, that christianity has depraved the morals of mankind; that vice is far more predominant among christians, than ever it was among the ancient heathens; and that therefore we may justly conclude, that christianity is less subservient to virtue and a moral life, than paganism. This has been urged as an argument against the divine original and the truth of christianity; and may be urged as an argument against the good policy of encouraging and supporting it in any state. The consideration of this objection then is pertinent and necessary to the discussion of the subject now before us.

In answer to this objection I beg leave to observe in the first place, that if vice *were* more predominant in christian nations, than it was among the heathens, it would not certainly follow, that this increase of vice is the effect of christianity. Christianity prevails in civilized nations only; and in such nations there is

* Every woman among some nations was obliged, at least once in her life, to prostitute herself to any person, even the greatest stranger, who would accept her favor. This was done in honor to Venus.

much more opportunity for many vices and much more temptation to them, than among those who are not civilized. Nay, in civilized nations only, is there a possibility of the prevalence of many vices. In proportion as civilization is promoted, the wants of men are increased. Their food, their drink, their apparel and the education of their children, must be more expensive, and more expense is in every respect required to their living in fashion among their neighbors. And in proportion to the increase of their wants, the temptation to covetousness, extortion, oppression, deceit and fraud, is increased. Again, in proportion as civilization is promoted, the means of luxury of every kind are increased, and with the means, the temptations to luxury and luxury itself are increased. No wonder a savage, who wishes for nothing more than what he may take in hunting and fishing, and who has furnished himself with this, does not steal, rob or extort his neighbor's property; no wonder he attempts not to obtain it by falsehood or fraud. Nor is it any wonder, that living on such a low and scanty diet as he generally does, he is very rarely guilty of a rape, of adultery or other lewdness. Nor ought it to be matter of wonder, that all these vices are far more prevalent in civilized nations, than among barbarians. But the prevalence of these vices in such nations, is not owing to christianity, but to civilization and its usual attendants. They were at least as prevalent among the ancient Grecks and Romans, as they are among us. Persecution does not usually obtain among heathen, because either they have no religion themselves to instigate them to persecution; or there is no religion different from their own, to be the object of their persecution; or if there be a different religion, it makes no opposition to that which they have chosen, and therefore their religious zeal is not excited against it.

This affords an answer to an objection to christianity much insisted on by some, that the heathens do not persecute; but that christians do most virulently persecute even one another; and therefore that christianity makes men worse instead of better. The answer to this objection is, that the different religious sentiments and forms of worship among the ancient heathens did not in general oppose each other. They rather justified each other, as the heathens maintained an intercommunity of gods and religions. Though every nation had its own gods and religion; yet whenever the individuals went into another nation, they joined in the worship of the gods and in the observance of the rites of the nation in which they then were. Therefore there was no opportunity for persecution. But the nature of christianity is very different. It condemns and opposes all other religions as false and

ruinous. Therefore as it touches the pride of those whom it condemns, it provokes opposition and the persecution of itself, merely because it tells the truth. And the professors of christianity too, by a misguided zeal, have been often led into the spirit and practice of persecution.

Now this persecution of christianity by those of other religions, is not the effect of christianity, but of opposition to it; and the persecuting spirit which has appeared in some christians, is not the effect of christianity, but of the abuse and perversion of it; and for neither of these is christianity itself answerable. The best institution in the world may be opposed and persecuted; and the best institution in the world may be abused and perverted. But christianity never gave any just occasion for either the persecution or perversion of itself.

Besides, the charge of persecution may justly be retorted. For no sooner did christianity make its appearance in the world, than it was violently opposed and virulently persecuted, by those very heathens, who in the objection now before us are said not to have been guilty of persecution. And as long as they had the power in their hands, this opposition was continued or repeated, under various Roman emperors, for ten successive and bloody persecutions, in which thousands and hundreds of thousands were martyred in various ways, the most malicious and cruel.

Nay, the heathens showed a disposition to persecute not only christians, but one another, whenever there was opportunity. No sooner did Socrates oppose the religion and polytheism of his countrymen, than they began a persecution of him, which ended in his death. And Cambyses, the Persian monarch, in contempt of the Egyptian god Apis, not only stabbed him with his dagger, but ordered the priests of Apis to be severely whipped, and all the inhabitants of Memphis to be slain, who should be found rejoicing on the occasion of the appearance of that god.* These things demonstrate, that the ancient heathens did possess an high degree of the spirit of persecution, and not only toward the christians, but toward one another. The like spirit hath been manifested by heathens of modern times. Passing other instances, I shall mention one which took place in our own country. By the exertions of our ancestors, the first European settlers of this country, a considerable number of the aborigines were converted to the christian faith. The pagan Indians were displeased with this, banished from their society all the converts, and when they could do it with safety, put them to death, and would have massacred

* Prideaux's Connection.

them all, had they not been restrained by the fear of our ancestors.

The facts concerning Socrates and Cambyses, furnish an answer to that part of the objection under consideration, which urges that christians persecute not only heathens, but one another; whereas heathens did not persecute one another. It appears by the facts just mentioned, that heathens have persecuted one another. Besides, the same reason is to be assigned for christians persecuting one another, as for the heathens persecuting christians. The protestants say, that the religion of the papists is fundamentally wrong; on the other hand, the papists assert the same concerning the protestants. Thus by a mutual renunciation, condemnations and excommunications of each other, the false zeal of these and other different sects among christians is kindled into persecution, on the same grounds on which persecution is begun and carried on, between christians and heathens. But by reason of the forementioned intercommunity of gods and religions among the ancient heathens, these grounds of persecution did not exist among them in general, though in some cases they did both exist and produce their usual fruits.

Let us now more directly attend to the charge brought against christianity, that vice is more prevalent among christians, than it was among the ancient heathens.

Christians indeed have no virtue to be the ground of boasting; on the other hand they have great reason to be ashamed and humbled on account of their vices and their depravity of manners. Still I maintain, that open vice is not so prevalent in christian nations, as it was among the ancient heathens. Let us compare those ancient heathens, of whom we know the most and who were the most improved and polite, with the christians of whom we know the most; the ancient Greeks and Romans with the citizens of the United States.

Here it is to be observed, that we labor under great disadvantage. We know our own country and its predominant vices, both public and private. In order to this we need but open our eyes and look around us. We have not the same advantage to know the ancients. We are entirely dependent on history for information concerning them and their vices; and this generally relates the public transactions of nations only, as their wars and treaties, their laws and public judgments; but is mostly silent concerning the morals and private lives of individuals or of the people considered collectively; and so far as we are ignorant of the ancients we have no right to charge them with vice. However, with all this disadvantage, I fear not to proceed to the comparison.

Let us then institute the comparison with respect to the principal moral virtues, as temperance, chastity, truth, justice and humanity.

1. As to *temperance*; though this was reckoned among the virtues by the pagan moral writers, yet it is plain from their writers in general, that drunkenness was exceedingly common among them, and among all ranks, among magistrates, philosophers and priests, as well as others. Their priests in some of their religious feasts were always intoxicated. Even Cato, though a Stoic philosopher, one of their strictest moralists and a principal magistrate, was remarkably addicted to this vice. So was Zeno, the founder of the sect of the Stoics; and Chrysippus, another Stoic philosopher died in consequence of excessive drinking at a sacrifice. The character of their principal magistrates, priests and philosophers, does not appear to have suffered much, if at all, by this vice. It must therefore have been considered by the people, as a very venial fault, if any at all. Indeed this is evident by all their writers. But how it is esteemed among us, and what would be the effect of it on the reputation of our principal magistrates and divines, I need not inform you.

2. As to *chastity*, it is manifest from the whole current of pagan writers, that they considered fornication as no crime, and therefore ran into it without reserve. Not only is this observable of Homer's heroes, but even the modest Virgil's pious Eneas, who was meant to be a perfect character, had an amour with Dido, without the least shame or sense of indecency. Simple fornication was not only commonly practised without restraint, but was allowed by all their philosophers, and was positively encouraged by some of them.* Many of the customs of the Greeks and Romans promoted lewdness. The manner of the appearance of women in some of their public exercises, was such as directly tended to that vice; and the ideas of the lawfulness and expediency of a community of wives so far prevailed and had such an influence on practice, as not only implied the violation of chastity, but had a most baleful general tendency with respect

* "None of the philosophers ever represented simple fornication, especially on the part of the man, as any vice at all. Cato commended a young man for frequenting the public stews; and Cicero expressly speaks of it, as a thing that was never found fault with."—*Priestly's Institutes.* All that was enjoined by Epictetus, who of all the philosophers, is perhaps the most celebrated for his strict maxims of morality, was, "that people should abstain from fornication before marriage as far as they could; and that if they did not abstain, they should use it lawfully, and not be severe in reprehending those who did not abstain." *Enchiridion*, Chap. 47.

to that virtue.* Though it is hardly credible, yet unnatural vices had too much the sanction of some legislators and philosophers, and were countenanced by many of them. Xenophon informs us, that the sin of Sodom was encouraged by the public laws of several of the states of Greece. It was more especially so among the Cretans, in order to prevent too great an increase of the people. Solon, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and the celebrated lawgiver of Athens, forbade this practice to slaves, which necessarily conveys the idea of his thinking it fit for free men only. According to Cicero, the Greek philosophers not only generally practised, but even gloried in this vice; and Plutarch informs us, that many parents would not suffer their children to keep the company of those philosophers, who pretended to be fond of them. Diogenes was remarkable for indulging himself in the most abominable practices openly, and without a sense of shame; affecting, according to the maxim of the Cynics, to live according to nature.† These unnatural vices were increased in a most astonishing manner, about the time of the promulgation of christianity. Seneca says, that in his time they were "practised openly and without shame at Rome." These accounts given by heathen writers, fully justify the charges thrown out on this head against the heathens, by the writers of the New Testament, especially by the apostle Paul, in his first chapter to the Romans; though to christians the inspired writers need no authority, but do of themselves sufficiently prove the amazing depravity of the heathen world in this respect.

3. *Truth* is a moral virtue, the obligation and necessity of which are perhaps as evident as those of any virtue whatever. Yet the Stoic philosophers taught that lying was lawful, whenever it was profitable; and Plato allowed, that a man may lie, who knows how to do it at a proper time.

4. Let us inquire how far *justice* was maintained and prac-

* "At Sparta, young women appeared naked in the public exercises; and when married women had no children, their husbands were encouraged to consent to a free intercourse between them and other men; a custom which Plutarch vindicates. This was also agreeable to the doctrine of the Stoics; and it is well known, that that rigid Stoic, Cato of Utica, consented to such an intercourse between his own wife and his friend Hortensius. Plato in his book of laws, recommends a community of women; and he advises that soldiers be not restrained with respect to any kind of sinful indulgence, even the most unnatural species of it, when they are on an expedition.—*Priestly.*

† Does not the forementioned deistic maxim of following nature, directly lead to the same abominable practices?

tised among the ancients. I now mean justice in matters of property. For that kind of justice which is opposed to oppression and cruelty will come into view, when we shall consider the humanity of the ancients. It is well known to have been a maxim at Sparta, that probity and everything else was to be sacrificed to the good of the state. The Spartans encouraged their children to steal, but punished those who were taken in the act, as not being dexterous in the business. "We may judge of the state of Greece, with respect to the kind of justice of which we are now speaking, from that passage in a dialogue of Xenophon, in which he humorously shows the advantages of poverty and the incoveniences of riches; and by what Tacitus says, that the temples were full of debtors and criminals, as churches and monasteries used formerly to be in Popish countries. Rome and the neighborhood of it, in the most interesting period of its history, viz. in the time of Cicero, abounded with robbers. Sallust says, that Cataline's army was much augmented by the accession of highwaymen about Rome. Cicero observed, that had Milo killed Clodius by night, it might have been imagined, that he had been killed by highwaymen, and that the frequency of such accidents would have favored the supposition, though he had with him thirty slaves completely armed and accustomed to blood and danger. By the law of the twelve tables, possession for two years formed a prescription for land, and of one year for movables; an evident mark of frequent violences, when such a law was necessary to secure a title to property."* How different our situation is from this, and how much more secure our persons and property are, I need not mention in this auditory.

5. We proceed now to inquire how far the ancient heathens practised the duties of *humanity*, and how far they violated those duties by outrage, oppression and cruelty. The Stoics condemned all compassion. No wonder then that they imbibed and practised inhumanity. Some philosophers, particularly Democritus recommended revenge; and Plato owns that forgiveness of injuries was contrary to the general doctrine of the philosophers. These ideas seem perfectly to coincide with those among the moderns, who are the great advocates for a sense of honor. And how far these ideas are consistent with scripture, with reason or with humanity, I leave you to judge.

It was common with the Romans to make war on other nations for the end of enlarging their own dominions, and aggrandizing their empire. Generally they had no better motive to their wars than this. But what is such a war, but a complica-

* Priestley's letters on general policy.

tion of downright robbery, cruelty and murder? They practised equal injustice in the manner in which they carried on their wars. They enslaved their captives or put them to death in cold blood, as they pleased. Their triumphs were most oppressive and cruel. The conquered kings and generals, loaded with chains, were driven into the city, and to the capitol before their conquerors, and were followed by mimicks and buffoons, who insulted over their misfortunes. When they arrived at the forum, they were led back to prison and there strangled; and this under the pretence of taking full revenge of their enemies. What better is this, than the treatment which our savage Indians give their captives?

The treatment which they gave those captives whose lives they spared, was correspondent to this cruelty toward those whom they put to death. As has been observed, they absolutely enslaved them; and by law, slaves were considered not as men, but as mere things, the mere property of their masters, and were treated, punished, and put to death at any time and in any manner, as their masters pleased, whether by beating, starving, torture, or otherwise. "The Spartans having conquered a neighboring nation, the Helots, enslaved them, frequently butchered them in cold blood, and applauded their youths, when they killed them by surprise." "The Romans were not ashamed to suffer their old and useless slaves, when worn out in their service, to starve on an island in the Tyber, as was their common practice. Vidius Pollio used to throw his slaves, who had disobliged him, into his fish ponds, to be preyed upon by his mullets." And though to our shame, to the shame of humanity and the scandal of christianity, a slavery and a treatment of slaves similar to what existed among the Romans, exist and are tolerated in some parts of America; yet this scandal cannot be thrown on christendom in general. Such a slavery did indeed once generally obtain in Europe; but the benevolent and humane spirit of the gospel and the principles of justice taught there, have long since generally abolished it from that quarter of the world.

The proscriptions and assassinations, which were so common among the ancients, are a further proof of their injustice, violence and inhumanity. It is well known that during the contests of Marius and Sylla, and during the triumvirate of Octavianus, Anthony and Lepidus, nothing was more common than to advertise a certain price for any man's or any number of men's heads; which was no other than hiring any cut-throat, and even a man's own domestics, to murder him and bring in his head. In this way the best men of Rome were murdered, and among

the rest, Cicero the great orator, philosopher and ornament of Rome. Amidst all the vices justly imputable to christians, they are not guilty of such barbarity and outrage as this. Such is the salutary influence of christianity, that even kings, who among the ancients no sooner fell into the hands of their rivals or opposers, than they were assassinated, are now not put to death without a formal trial; which is a clear demonstration among many others, of our improvement in civilization and humanity, beyond anything which existed among the most enlightened heathens.

Another instance of the barbarity and inhumanity of the ancients, is their treatment of their children. "The ancient Roman laws gave the father a power of life and death over his children, upon this principle, that he who gave, had also the power to take away. And a son could not acquire any property of his own during the life of his father; but all his acquisitions belonged to his father, or at least the profits, for life."* Thus children, during the life of their fathers, were perfect slaves, and in a worse condition than the slaves in this state; for the master in this state has not the power of life and death over his slaves. Nor were these mere speculations of the Romans; but their practice was correspondent. Hence the custom of exposing children; that is, of laying them, as soon as born, in the streets, on the banks of rivers, or in other frequented places, and unless some compassionate person should take them up and provide for them, leaving them there to perish and to be devoured by dogs. The motive to this horrid practice was, that the parents might be free from the trouble and expense of their education. Both Plato and Aristotle say, that there should be laws to prevent the education of weak children. Accordingly among the other Greeks, beside the Thebans, when a child was born, it was laid on the ground, and if the father designed to educate it, he immediately took it up. But if he forebore to do this, the child was carried away and exposed. The Lacedemonians indeed had a different custom; for with them all new born children were brought before certain triers, who were some of the gravest men in their own tribes, by whom the infants were carefully viewed; and if they were found lusty and well favored, they gave orders for their education; but if weakly and deformed, they ordered them to be cast into a deep cavern in the earth, near the mountain Taygetus, as thinking it neither for the good of the children nor for the public interest, that defective children should be brought up. It was the unhappy fate of daughters especially to be thus treated, as re-

* Blackstone.

quiring more charges to educate and settle them in the world than sons.

In several nations, not only infants, but also the aged and the infirm, were exposed and left to perish.

Another horrid inhumanity, prevalent among the ancient heathens, was the practice of sacrificing captives and slaves at the funerals of the dead. Thus Achilles sacrificed twelve young Trojans to the manes of Patroclus; and Eneas sent captives to Evander, to be sacrificed at the funeral of Pallas. This was first practised with respect to persons of great eminence only, but at length it was done at the funerals of all persons of property, and became a necessary part of the ceremony.

Another practice as horrid as any I have mentioned, was that of exhibiting gladiators, trained to fencing and the use of the sword, spear, etc., on purpose that they might fight and kill one another on the stage, for the mere entertainment of the spectators, as some people now bait bulls and set dogs to fighting. "These poor wretches were made to swear they would fight unto death; and if they failed of this, they were put to death by fire or sword, clubs, whips, or the like."* "Those who have not attended to history, are apt to imagine, that the exhibition of gladiators was a rare thing, and that when it happened, a few pairs only were engaged. But it was far otherwise. Under the Roman emperors this inhuman entertainment cost innumerable lives. Caesar when Edile, gave three hundred and twenty gladiators. Gordian in the time of his Edileship, exhibited twelve entertainments, that is, one in each month. In some of these were five hundred champions, and in none of them less than one hundred and fifty. Taking it at a medium, he must have exhibited at the very least, three thousand. Titus exhibited these cruel shows for an hundred days together. The good and moderate Trajan continued these spectacles for an hundred and twenty-three days; and in that time gave ten thousand. When we consider how many different ranks of people gave these entertainments, Ediles, Pretors, Questors, Consuls, Emperors and Priests, besides private persons at funerals (which became so common a practice, that it was an article in a last will) we must be convinced, that the numbers were vast. What adds to the inhumanity of this custom, is, that it was designed for a gay entertainment and was attended as such. This horrible custom grew to such an extravagance, that it was found necessary to moderate it by law, in the time of the heathen Emperors. Constantine first prohibited it altogether. But so

* Chamber's Dictionary.

violent was the taste for it, that it crept in again. The Emperor Honorius entirely suppressed it."

I shall take notice of only one more vice of the ancient heathens, that is *suicide*. This was recommended by many philosophers, as an heroic act of virtue, and was practised by some of the highest fame, as by Zeno the founder of the sect of the Stoics, by Cato of Utica, and by Brutus. No wonder if under such instructors and such examples, suicide was very common among the ancients. Beside the wickedness of this in the sight of God, the ruinous tendency of it in a political view is manifest on the slightest reflection. By this one vice not only any man may deprive the state of his aid and throw his family and dependents on the public; but the most important citizens, by throwing away their own lives in the most important and critical moment, may greatly endanger and entirely overthrow the commonwealth. What if our *Washington*, or the most wise and influential members of our Congress, had destroyed themselves in the most critical periods of the late war?

From this brief survey of the vices of the ancient heathens, I leave my hearers to judge how well founded the objection against christianity is, that it has depraved the morals of mankind.

I have now finished the observations which I intended, on the subject proposed, which was, The necessity of a belief of christianity by the citizens of this state, in order to our public and political prosperity. In subserviency to this general design I have endeavored to show, that some religion is necessary to our political prosperity; that no other religion than the christian, can be generally received and established in this country; and that if some other religion could be established among us, it would by no means be so useful in a political view, as the christian. I have endeavored to illustrate the last observation by a comparison of christianity with the philosophical religion of infidelity and with ancient paganism. I now beg leave to make two or three inferences from what has been said.

1. If christianity be more useful than any other religion, even for political purposes, we may presume that it is still more useful for the other purposes, which are indeed its immediate objects, piety and true virtue, and peace and comfort in them. The great foundations of religion and virtue are, the moral perfections of God, his moral government, the rule of our duty, a future state of retribution, the possibility of pardon and the end of our creation. Let us in these several particulars compare christianity with the philosophical religion, which is the only rival of christianity with any among us.

(1) As to the moral perfections of God, christianity certainly teaches them more clearly than they can be learnt from any light afforded by the philosophical religion. The scriptures assure us, that "holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;" that he is "a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he;" that he is "the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Yea, they assure us, that "God is love." They clear up the difficulty arising from the evil in the world, by informing us of the end of all things, and that all things shall finally be overruled for good. But the philosophical religion gives no clear evidence at all of the moral perfections of God. This is acknowledged by some of the principal writers on that system. Hume, the most acute of all infidels, says we ought to infer from the works of God, intermixed as they are with good and evil, that God is of a mixed character, partly good and partly evil. Also Lord Bolingbroke, another principal deistical writer, holds, that there is no evidence of the moral perfections of God.

(2) The like advantage have we by the scriptures as to the evidence of the reality and nature of the moral government of God. On the pretence that we are under the influence of a necessity of coercion, it is denied by some infidels that we are moral agents and that we are capable of either virtue or vice. Now not only is this matter cleared up by revelation, but it is to be observed, that to be consistent, such infidels ought also to deny, that we are capable of any crime in civil society.

If we be not moral agents, we are no more capable of murder, than a stock or a stone; and a man who from malice prepense kills another, no more deserves punishment, than the stone or the tree, which falls on a man and crushes him to death; and the man who from a wish to introduce and establish arbitrary government in his country, now a free and happy republic, betrays its ships and fortresses, no more deserves punishment, than the tempests which sink the former, or the fire which consumes the latter.

Some deny, that God at all concerns himself with human affairs or actions. But this is not only not reconcilable with the scriptures, but not with the moral perfections of God. If we be capable of virtue, and yet he neglect us, so as not to set before us proper motives to it, and not to show by proper rewards and punishments his approbation of the virtuous, and disapprobation of the vicious; this cannot be reconciled with his moral perfection.

It is further urged, that we are not in any case punishable, as all things are right, or as the poet expresses it, *whatever is, is right.* If by this observation be meant, that things are by the all-wise and all-governing providence of God, overruled to answer a good purpose, though in many instances directly contrary to their natural tendency; this is granted. But if it be meant, that all things in their own nature tend to good, this is not true. Malice has no natural tendency to good but a natural tendency to evil. On the other hand, benevolence has a natural tendency to good. Nor will it be pretended, that if malice reigned through the universe, the universe would be as happy, as if benevolence universally reigned. It is the natural tendency of a rational action, which determines its moral quality, and not the consequence produced by Almighty God, contrary to its natural tendency.

If all human actions were in a moral view indifferent, we should no more deserve punishment for murder, than we should for saving our country from ruin.

This scheme shuts all moral *good* out of the universe, as well as all moral evil. For if all the tempers and actions of men, are as to morality alike, it must be because there is no morality in any of them. If there be moral good in any of those tempers or actions, there must be moral evil in the directly opposite; and if there be no moral evil in the latter, there is no moral good in the former; as if there were no natural evil in pain there would be no natural good in pleasure.

But while infidels confound themselves and the principles of reason, in their discourses concerning the moral government of God; the scriptures assure us of the reality of that government, and of our accountableness to God.

(3) The scriptures give us a plain and excellent rule of duty, pointing out our duty not only in general, but in all the most important particulars. How extremely deficient in this instance also, is the philosophical religion! It is indeed said, that the rule of our duty is right reason and the law of nature, and that virtue is a conformity to them. But this is saying no more than that virtue is virtue, and that the rule of our duty is the rule of our duty. For right reason in this case means what is reasonable and right in a moral sense; and duty and what is right in a moral sense are the same thing; and it is just as difficult to find out the law of reason and of nature, as to find out our duty.

(4) The scriptures give us the most positive assurance of a future state. But the philosophical religion can never assure us of this, because it cannot assure us of the moral perfections of God, by which alone he is disposed to reward the righteous and punish

the wicked. Therefore infidels are greatly divided among themselves on this subject. Some as was before observed believe a future state, some disbelieve it. Those who believe such a state, believe that God made all men for their own personal happiness, and that therefore he will make them all happy in the future world. But all this depends on the moral perfections of God, of which they, as their principal writers confess, have no evidence. And if there be no evidence of God's moral perfections, there is no evidence, that he designs the happiness of his creatures either here or hereafter; nor is there any evidence but that he designs the final *misery* of all his creatures. Or if infidels had evidence of the moral perfections of God, they would not have evidence, that God made every man for the end of his personal happiness. The perfect goodness of God doubtless implies, that he made all things with a design to promote good on the whole or on the large scale. So that taking the system of intelligent creatures together, there shall be the greatest possible happiness in it. But this does not imply, that every individual creature shall be completely happy. There is no accounting for the calamities and sufferings of this life on any other supposition, than that they will all finally issue in the greatest happiness of the system; and to suppose that they conduce to the good of the system, by making the persons themselves who suffer them here, more happy hereafter, is a mere conjecture unsupported by any argument. Therefore to indulge it and to build upon it, is altogether unreasonable and unphilosophical.

On the whole, there is no evidence but that the good of the general system may be promoted by the exemplary punishment of the wicked in the future world. And if it would be promoted by such a punishment, infinite goodness not only admits of it, but requires and demands it.

(5) The scriptures assure us of a way of pardon and acceptance with God; but the philosophical religion gives no such assurance. Infidels do indeed expect to be pardoned on their bare repentance. But the expectation of *pardon* on repentance, implies an acknowledgement, that they deserve punishment even though they repent, and that such punishment would be just; otherwise there could be no *pardon* in the case. To pardon is to exempt from punishment not an innocent man, but a guilty one; and to pardon a penitent implies that he deserves punishment, and that his punishment would be just. But if the punishment of the penitent would be just, the interest of the kingdom of God, the great community against which he has sinned, requires his punishment. The very idea of a just punishment is

of one which, (there being no atonement or substitution,) is due to the community or to the public good of the community, against which the crime punished was committed. But if the public good of God's kingdom, which is the universe, require the punishment of the sinner, it is not consistent with divine goodness to pardon him. What ground then has the infidel to expect pardon, when both justice and goodness require his punishment?

(6) Christianity informs us of the end of our creation. It is generally holden by infidels, as was before observed, that we were made for our own personal happiness. But if this were true, it would prove, that God does concern himself with human actions, and that he aims to prevent those which tend to our destruction. It would also prove, that those rational actions which tend to destroy our happiness, are morally evil, and that all actions are not in the same sense right. The evidence that God created us for our own happiness, must depend on the evidence of God's moral perfections. But as has been observed, the infidel has no evidence of these. Besides, if God really created us all for the end of our own personal happiness, it seems that he has in this world obtained his end, in a very imperfect degree only; and on the plan of infidelity there is no evidence of a future state. Therefore on that plan there is no evidence, that God will ever obtain his end in our creation. Or if infidels should grant, that we were made for the general good of the system of intelligences, this would be to give up the chief object of infidelity; because the general good may admit of our misery in the future world, as it does of our misery in this.

But christianity clearly informs us, that God made all things for his glory, implying the greatest happiness and perfection of the creation as a system; or for the glorious exercise and display of his power, wisdom and goodness in raising his kingdom, which is the creation, as a system, to the highest degree of perfection and happiness.

Thus we see in what darkness, as to the most essential principles of religion, we should have been involved, had we not been favored with the light of divine revelation, and in what darkness they are involved, who embrace the philosophical religion of infidelity. And thus we have further proof how happy that people is, whose God is the Lord, not only as this circumstance lays a foundation for their political good, but especially as it lays a foundation for true virtue and piety, for peace and comfort here and eternal happiness in the favor of God hereafter.

2. A second inference from this subject is, that since christianity appears to be necessary to the public good of the state, it

ought to be encouraged by magistrates and rulers of every description. They are appointed to be the guardians of the public good; of course it is their duty to protect and promote everything tending to it, and especially everything necessary to it. Therefore as christianity is necessary to the public good, they are bound to encourage, promote and inculcate that, by their example and profession, by speaking and acting in favor of it both in public and private, by supporting christian ordinances and worship, and by promoting to places of trust and profit those who profess it and live agreeably, and who are otherwise properly qualified. Magistrates are called to do all this on the ground of the soundest policy.

3. For the same reasons the citizens in general are obligated to encourage and promote christianity, by being themselves christians and that not only in profession, but in heart and life, and by giving their suffrages for those who are of the same character. It is indeed to be confessed, that not all professed christians are good men or real christians; yet among professed christians are many men, who possess good abilities and a proper share of information, who are strictly moral and upright, and who expect to give an account of their conduct to God. Such are the men to be promoted in the state; and the citizens by promoting such men, will encourage and promote christianity, and at the same time promote the good of the state.

I would ask the further patience of the auditory, while I close the discourse, with the addresses usual on this occasion.

In the first place I beg leave to address myself to His Excellency the Governor.

May it please your Excellency,—In obedience to your command I appear in the desk this day; and I could think of no subject more important and at the same time more suitable to the present occasion, than the happiness of that people whose God is the Lord. I have therefore endeavored to illustrate the necessity of the christian faith and practice, to the prosperity of the state. I may appeal to your Excellency how far this faith and practice have hitherto contributed to our political prosperity. Had not our ancestors been firm and exemplary in this faith and practice; had they not taken pains to hand them down to us; had they not in all their towns and settlements instituted schools, in which the principles of christianity, as well as other things were taught; had they not provided for the support of public worship, for the due observance of the Lord's day, and for the public teaching of christianity on that day; had they not provided for the support of a studious and learned ministry, who being themselves men of knowledge, should be able to instruct

others; I appeal to your Excellency, whether our political affairs would not at present have worn a very different aspect. And if our supreme magistrates had not been, both by profession and apparent practice, christians, it would doubtless have had a very baleful influence on the christian and moral character of the people at large, and consequently on our political prosperity. But we are happy in that we have had from the beginning, even to the present day, a series of Governors, who have been not only an honor to the state, but ornaments to our churches. May such a series be still kept up without interruption. This, as it will be a proof of our christian character, will also be a proof of our public prosperity in every successive period, and a pledge of our subsequent prosperity. May God grant, that your Excellency shall effectually contribute to this prosperity in every way, in which your eminent situation affords opportunity. And when earthly states and empires shall be no more, may your Excellency, in that series of excellent men and excellent Governors, and among all real christians, "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of your Father."

The discourse also addresses itself to his Honor the Lieutenant Governor, to the Legislative Council of the state, and to the Representatives of the towns in General Assembly.

Honorable Legislators,—Since the belief and practice of christianity are so necessary to the political good of our state, and since you are appointed to be the guardians of our political good, I thought it not impertinent to suggest to you some important means, by which you may obtain the end for which you are appointed. Opposition to christianity both in faith and practice was never, at least in our country, so great and so increasing, as at the present day. It lies with you, gentlemen, by a steady belief, profession and practice of christianity; by your conversation and weight; by the appointments which you shall make to the various offices, civil and military, and by all your public proceedings, to withstand this opposition, and to guard against the danger to the public good, arising from the depravity of manners which opposition to christianity naturally induces. It is your province, in conjunction with his Excellency the Governor, to appoint all our executive civil authority and to confer the highest military honors. When men of licentious principles and practice are promoted either in the civil or military line, it gives a dignity and an influence to vice and irreligion. And "one sinner destroys much good," especially when exalted to a high station of honor and authority. Now, if you give this advantage to vice, you will thereby injure the state; but more immediately

you will injure religion and the kingdom of Christ. And let me beseech you to remember, that you also have a master in heaven, to whom you, as well as the rest of men, must give an account. The only way to gain his approbation is, to keep a conscience void of offence, and in your political transactions not to act from party attachments and private connections, not to practise intrigue to serve your own interests or those of your friends; but to endeavor to serve the public in the best manner according to your capacity and opportunity. In so doing you will appoint to the several executive offices, men of knowledge and discretion; men that fear God and hate covetousness; men who will be just and rule in the fear of God. By the promotion of such men, virtue will be encouraged and vice will be restrained; by their official proceedings, law and justice will be executed, and "judgment will run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream," even that righteousness which exalteth a nation." Then shall our political interests be in a prosperous state; then shall we be that happy people whose God is the Lord.

The Reverend Pastors of the churches, who are present, will also suffer the word of exhortation.

My fathers and brethren,—We who are employed in the work of the ministry, are deeply interested in this subject. We are interested in the prosperity of the state, and are peculiarly interested in this means of prosperity on which I have been insisting. It is our business to study and teach christianity, and thus to promote the political good of the state, as well as the spiritual good of the souls of our hearers. This is a noble employment, to fidelity and zeal in which, not only the motives of religion call us, but even those of patriotism. Therefore if we have any love to religion and the souls of men; nay if we have any public spirit and love to our country, let us diligently study the evidences, the nature, the doctrines and duties of christianity, and inculcate them with all plainness, assiduity and perseverance, giving line upon line and precept upon precept. This is to be done,

1. By instruction. Without communicating instruction and information concerning the truth, we can expect to do nothing in our work to any good purpose. Knowledge and not ignorance is the mother of real devotion. The rational mind is to be led by the exhibition of the truth only.

2. By every motive to persuade, drawn from reason and revelation, from time and eternity; and among others this motive of the public good of the state and our general happiness, liberty and prosperity as a people, is not to be omitted.

3. By a christian life and conversation. If we do these

things; if we thus instruct, persuade and live, we shall at last stand in our lot, and shall be owned as his, when Christ our Lord and judge "shall make up his jewels."

Finally I shall, in the last place, address myself in a very few words to this numerous auditory collectively. Men and brethren, this subject nearly concerns you all. How happy would you be, if the Lord were indeed your God? Nor can you be truly happy on any other condition. However prosperous you may be in your private concerns, in your property, your business and your reputation; yet unless you are the objects of the favor of God and the heirs of eternal life, you are truly in a miserable situation. You have not only the motive of eternal happiness to choose the Lord for your God; but the motives of the peace, good order, and happiness of the people as a body politic, and the general prosperity of the state. You all feel a firm attachment to your liberties and to the privileges of a republican government. Of all forms of government a republic most essentially requires virtue and good morals in the great body of the people, in order to its prosperity and even its existence. But the way to virtue and good morals is to choose the Lord for your God. Nor is this all; you not only have to choose and serve the Lord yourselves, but by the same reasons by which you are obligated to choose the Lord for your God, you are obligated to seek out and by your suffrages to promote to legislative authority, such as are of the same character. In a republic all authority is derived from the people; and such as they generally are, we may expect their representatives, legislators and all their civil authority will be. If you have the Lord for your God, you will elect those of the same character with yourselves, to be your legislators; you will encourage and support them and other faithful rulers in the thorough discharge of their duties of civil government, and you will withhold your suffrages from those who acknowledge not the Lord as their God and regard not his law. Nor can you consistently and innocently give your suffrages to men of this last description; for thus you would give a sanction and influence to sin and vice, would be partakers of their wickedness and would do an injury to the state.

But if you and the good people of the state in general shall unite to practise virtue and christianity, and to promote the wisest and best men among us, we shall doubtless be that happy people described in the text, and "judgment shall dwell in the wilderness and righteousness remain in the fruitful field; and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."

SERMON XII.

THE DUTY OF MINISTERS TO PREACH THE TRUTH.*

JOHN 18: 37. — *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.*

THESE are the words of our blessed Savior. In them he informs us, that one end of his incarnation and ministry was, that by bearing witness to the truth, he might communicate the knowledge of it. The same is doubtless the end of the ordinary ministry of the gospel, and should be the object aimed at by every minister. From our text therefore I deduce this doctrine:

The great duty of the ministers of the gospel is, to preach the truth.

Under this doctrine I purpose,

I. No show what truth ministers of the gospel ought to preach.

II. To mention some reasons in confirmation of the doctrine.

I. ***I am to show what truth a minister of the gospel ought to preach.***

Truth is very extensive and of various kinds. There is truth in every science, in mathematics, philosophy, history, etc. It will not be pretended, that mathematical and philosophical truth is the proper subject of the evangelical ministry. Nor is historical truth, any further than it illustrates the gospel, by exhibiting the facts of it, or other important facts relating to the works and the character of God.

The truth then intended in the doctrine is primarily evangelical truth, and secondarily all other truth which relates to the gospel and tends to illustrate it; as all truth relating to God and his character, especially his moral perfections; all truth relating to his supreme, universal and sovereign government; all truth relating to his law, its requirements and threatenings; relating to sin, its nature and evil; relating to ourselves, our present fallen state, and the ruin consequent on the fall; particularly our na-

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tive and total depravity, our actual sins and the various aggravations of them; our demerit as sinners; our dependence on the mere mercy and sovereign grace of God; our own moral inability to bring ourselves to repentance and holiness of heart and life, and our absolute insufficiency to make satisfaction for our sins; the necessity of an atonement and one of infinite value, correspondent to the demerit of our sin; the character of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, his divinity, his humanity, his offices, his sufferings in our stead, and his readiness to save sinners of every description, who come to him for this purpose; the conditions of his salvation, the privileges and rewards of it, and the inevitable consequences of a rejection of it.

This is a very brief summary of the truths, which every minister of the gospel is obligated to preach and inculcate.

II. *I am to mention some reasons in confirmation of this doctrine.*

The following reasons show, that ministers of the gospel are obliged to preach the truth or the real doctrines of scripture.

1. The *truth* was the subject of the preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. He certainly is a proper example in this, as well as in his common conduct. He was a perfect preacher. Therefore he is to be imitated by all other preachers. And he in our text, informs us not only that he preached the truth, but that this was one great end of his incarnation and ministry.

2. The same was the subject of the preaching of the apostles and prophets. 2 Cor. 4: 2, "We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the *truth* commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Chap. 13: 8, "For we can do nothing against the *truth*, but for the *truth*." Gal. 4: 16, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" 1 Tim. 2: 7, "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and *verity*;" i. e. in faith and *truth*.

The great business of the prophets was to declare the word of God, which is the truth, as it was immediately taught them, or as they were by God directed to repeat former revelations. The great business of the apostles was to preach the gospel, which is the system of divine truth given to the church and to the world, in the last and most perfect dispensation. Both the prophets and apostles were inspired by the infallible spirit of God which guided them into all necessary truth, and preserved them, in their official proceedings, from everything inconsistent with it. Under the influence of this spirit they preached the truth and that only.

3. The *knowledge* of the *truth* is necessary to true religion. It is necessary both to the affections and to the practice of it.

(1) The knowledge of the truth is necessary to true religious affections. The knowledge of the true God is necessary to the true love of God. That love of God, which implies true virtue and real holiness, is the love of the true God and of the true and real character of God. To love any other than the true character of God, is as really to love a false God as to love *Jupiter* or *Dagon*. For instance to love God as a perfectly holy and wise God, is a holy affection; but to love him as one who tolerates and connives at sin and saves all at last, whatever their lives and characters be in this world, is a wrong and sinful affection. To love God as a benevolent being, aiming at his own glory consisting in the good and happiness of the intellectual system, is a right and holy affection. But to love him in the idea, that he is aiming at some partial, private good, or our own particular good only, is no exercise of true virtue, but a mere love of ourselves or of some party. Therefore we must have the knowledge of the truth in this important particular, and just ideas of the divine character, in order to the exercise of true virtue and religion in the love of God.

Similar observations may be made concerning the divine law. If we believe that it forbids and condemns some sins only, and in that view love it, there is in that love no true religion, but irreligion. If we believe it forbids all sin and love it in that view, that is true virtue and religion. If we love the divine law, because we believe it denounces some small temporary punishment, and cannot bear it, as threatening an endless punishment, we hereby show, that we are not friends, but enemies to the law and the truth.

We must believe, that there is a God, or we cannot love him at all. We must believe, that Jesus Christ is the Savior, or we cannot receive and trust in him as our Savior. We must believe the scriptures, or how shall we receive and comply with them? We must believe that we are sinners, or we can never repent. We must believe the atonement, or we shall never depend on it, nor seek forgiveness and salvation on the ground of it. And so with respect to every other truth of the gospel. We can have no right exercise or affection in view of any truth, unless we know and believe that truth.

(2) The knowledge of the truth is necessary to all genuine religious practice. Genuine practice implies genuine affections, and is founded on them. Therefore without repeating, it is sufficient to say, that the knowledge of the truth is necessary to gen-

uine religious practice, for the same reasons, that it is necessary to genuine religious affections.

Having thus briefly illustrated the doctrine, and having mentioned some reasons in confirmation of it, I proceed to several inferences, which were indeed principally intended, in the choice of this subject.

1. Hence we see the groundlessness of a sentiment holden and advanced by many in these days, that it is of no importance what a man's religious creed or sentiments are, provided he be an honest man and sincere in his religion. Let us examine this sentiment.

By an honest man in this proposition must be meant, either one who is honest and just in matters of property; or one who in his religion professes and acts as he thinks. If the latter be meant, then an honest man and one who is sincere in his religion are the very same; and then the proposition now under consideration is this, that it is of no importance what a man's religious sentiments are, provided that in his religion he believes as he professes and does what he believes to be right. But this any man may do, let his religion be what it will. A papist, a Mohammedan or a pagan may be equally sincere in this sense, as the best Christian; and if this sincerity be all which is necessary in religion; then all kinds of religions, as to that which is essential to true religion and the benefits of it, are perfectly alike; and of course it is a matter of indifference which we embrace and which we reject, if we embrace any. But this cannot be reconciled with either scripture or reason. Many of the ancient worshippers of Dagon and Baal, and of the gods many and lords many, so called, were very sincere and in good earnest in their worship; yet they are every where condemned in scripture, as they are also by the voice of reason.

But perhaps it will be said, that in the proposition, that it is of no importance what a man's religious sentiments are, provided he be an honest man and sincere in his religion; by honesty is meant moral honesty, or justice to man in matters of property. If this be intended, then the proposition is this, that justice to men together with the forementioned sincerity, is the whole of religion. But we see by what has been said already, that the forementioned sincerity is no part of true religion, and that in this respect it is just nothing at all. Therefore if justice to men with this sincerity be the whole of religion; as this sincerity is no part of true religion, the whole of it must centre in mere justice to men. But this cannot be reconciled with either scripture or reason. The scripture requires us to render not only unto Caesar the things

which are Caesar's, but also unto God, the things which are God's; and the Jews in the time of the prophet Malachi, were severely reproved for having robbed God. Mal. 2: 8, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tythes and offerings." Yea, the scripture requires us to love the Lord our God with all our heart. And it is perfectly rational, that if he be supremely great, good and glorious; if he be our Creator, our chief and constant benefactor; he should be the object of our first and chief regard. So that justice to men and a mere moral life, are so far from the whole of religion, that they are not the principal part of it.

That it is of no importance what a man's religious sentiments are, is so far from the truth, that nothing is more manifest, than that those sentiments must daily influence his religious feelings and affections, and consequently his practice. If a man believe, that he is dependent on divine grace for a renovation, sanctification and forgiveness, this naturally tends to humble him. But if he believe, that he is in no need of divine grace in any of these respects, he must necessarily feel so far self-sufficient, so far independent, and consequently must be spiritually proud and self-righteous. If he believe the necessity of the atonement of Christ; this powerfully persuades him to look thither and to place his dependence there. If he believe not the necessity of the atonement, we may be sure he will depend on some other foundation. If he believe, that God will pardon, and is by his own infinite goodness bound to pardon, any sinner in consequence of his repentance merely, without a mediator; he will certainly neglect Christ as the mediator. But if he believe, that a mediator is absolutely necessary, and that there is no other name but that of Christ, given under heaven among men, whereby we can be saved, what can more strongly urge him to receive and trust in Christ? Thus as a man thinketh in his heart so is he; such is his real character; and no man can commonly be expected to be better than his principles.

2. Hence we see the mistake of those who hold, that we need not know much of the doctrines of christianity; that it is not useful either for the purpose of conviction to sinners or edification to saints; that such knowledge rather tends to stifle and prevent both conviction and edification; that we may be just as good christians without that knowledge as with it; yea better, because it rather obstructs christian experience and exercise, and quenches christian zeal and fervor.

But on candid examination it will be found, that this is a great mistake; and that the knowledge of divine truth is of a most hap-

py tendency both to the conviction of sinners and the edification of saints. Certainly the knowledge of the existence and character of God, of his holiness and his will, of his law and of our violations of it, of the righteousness and goodness of the law, of the punishment and evil of sin, of the grace of the gospel and of our neglect of that grace, most directly tends to produce and increase conviction. Indeed genuine conviction cannot exist without knowledge of this kind; and whatever fear or terror, without the knowledge of the truth, exists in any man's mind, which some call conviction, is mere enthusiasm and not genuine conviction.

The knowledge of the truth is equally useful and necessary to edification as to conviction. The necessity of it to this, I before endeavored to illustrate. How can we love God, if we know him not? or believe in Christ, without the knowledge of him? and so in every instance of christian exercise. And the more we know of God, the more opportunity and the greater motives we have, to love, fear and serve him. The more we know of his glorious majesty and sovereignty, the greater motive we have to adore, praise and submit to him. The more the christian knows of the divine law, the more will he naturally delight in it after the inward man. The more he knows of Christ, his grace, sufficiency and fulness, the more will he rejoice and trust in him. And so with respect to all divine truth. Just as a man, who has a taste for music, or poetry, or the fine arts in general, is more delighted, the more he is instructed in those arts, and his taste for them and for their peculiar and most delightful excellences, is the more increased.

So that there is no foundation for the imagination, that the knowledge of christian doctrines tends to obstruct either conviction or edification. Indeed that kind of conviction and edification, which is not built on the foundation of the truth, but of imagination, is obstructed by the knowledge of the truth and will naturally be abolished by it. And the sooner such conviction and edification are abolished, the better, as they are not favorable to true religion, but to enthusiasm and false religion, which so far as they obtain, lead astray from the footsteps of the flock, and this straying may be fatal to the soul.

3. Hence we infer the duty of all, who live under the light of the gospel, diligently to study the doctrines of it and of the whole word of God. This is the way to know more of God, of his law, of his will, of Christ and of the free and infinite grace of God, and the way to greater joy in them and conformity to them. This is the way to know more of our own vileness as sinners, and to be more humble in the view of it. This is the way to know

more of our duty and of the motives to the performance of it. But the knowledge of all these objects tends most directly to our edification in the christian life.

4. Especially are ministers of the gospel under obligation to the careful study of its doctrines. Their principal business, as has been attempted to be illustrated, is to preach and teach the truth. But how shall they be able to teach the truth, if they be ignorant of it themselves? And the knowledge of it is to be obtained in no other way, than by a diligent study of the scriptures.

Besides, they ought to seek their own edification. They are at least under equal obligation to this, as other men. Nay, their obligation is greater, in proportion to their greater advantages for edification, and the greater advantage which their own edification gives them, to promote that of others.

Yet not only are some ministers too negligent of this duty of thoroughly studying the doctrines of scripture, but some designedly avoid it. They mean to preach *practically* and not to puzzle their people with *deep* doctrines. No doubt that preaching which is truly practical, is the best and most useful. But that a minister may preach practically and most usefully, it is not necessary that he be ignorant of the doctrines of the gospel; nor is it necessary, that he should not preach those doctrines. That is the most practical preaching, which most happily conduces to promote christian experience and practice; and that preaching most happily conduces to promote these, which is founded on the truth and which urges all the motives and arguments, which the truth affords, to excite to christian experience and practice; and any other arguments than these are not proper to be urged, nor do they on the whole lead to christian experience and practice, but to enthusiasm, and ultimately to irreligion and infidelity.

Some seem to conceive, that it is a minister's duty to *exhort* only, and urge and press his hearers to become and to live as christians. But are these exhortations to be pressed with motives drawn from the truth or from falsehood? The latter will not be pretended; and as there is no medium in the case, they must be pressed with arguments drawn from the truth only. And in order to this the truth must be known, must be searched out by study, and must be taught; which is the very thing for which I plead. The mind cannot be rationally persuaded by any other means, than by arguments drawn from the truth; nor indeed ought it.

Therefore for a minister to neglect his studies, on this principle, that the knowledge of divine truth is not necessary or useful to enable him to preach practically and usefully, is to proceed on ground that will by no means support him. The only truly prac-

tical and useful preaching is that which is founded on the truth and is enforced with arguments drawn from it; and to such preaching a knowledge and diligent study of the truths and doctrines of the gospel, are necessary.

For a minister to neglect the study of those truths from *indolence*, is still worse; it is inexcusable. Ministers are bound to be at least as industrious as other men, and many arguments might be mentioned why they should, if their health admit, be still more industrious.

But it is to be feared, that some neglect study on a still different principle. They are afraid, that if they study thoroughly and attend to what has been or may be said on certain important subjects, they shall be convinced, that those doctrines are true, which in some places are extremely unpopular. Therefore they do not wish to be convinced of their truth, and will not attend to them, lest they should be convinced; or lest they should be under a necessity of giving their opinion concerning them, and thus expose themselves to the censure of one party or the other, either the advocates or the opposers of those doctrines. For this reason they will not read those books, in which those doctrines are contained, nor converse much with those persons, who hold them. And if they be asked their opinion, they make this apology for not giving it, that they have not read the books, nor examined the arguments relating to those doctrines; and of set purpose they avoid to do either.

Now can this be justified? What is this but shutting their eyes against the light? And how can this be done with a good conscience? Are we not commanded to "prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good?" Besides; this conduct argues a want of liberality of sentiment, and a contractedness, which it is presumed, they who act in this manner, would not wish to have imputed to them. A man of true liberality of sentiment and feeling, is willing to hear both sides of every important question, and is not afraid that he shall receive too much light.

5. Hence we learn, that it is the duty of ministers of the gospel, to preach the truth *plainly* and in a manner that is intelligible to their people in general. I have endeavored to show, that it is their principal duty to preach the truth; but to preach it in obscure and unintelligible terms is not very different from not preaching it at all. The words of the apostle Paul are worthy of notice in this case. 1 Cor. 14: 19, "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that with my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." Nor ought we to be deterred from preaching any es-

sential truth, by the consideration, that it is unpopular. Every truth of the gospel in its proper connection is opposed to the carnal heart, and with carnal men will be unpopular. Therefore if we proceed on this ground, we must suppress every truth.

Indeed some preachers, it is confessed, act an imprudent part. They declare the most offensive truths in the most offensive terms, and in those terms, against which their hearers or many of them are greatly prejudiced, and which they really misunderstand, having been long accustomed to affix to them a wrong meaning. This is not to teach the truth; but it is the way to prevent the knowledge of it; and the way not to do good but hurt. There are two extremes in this, as in other cases. One is, not to declare important and useful truth faithfully; the other is, to declare it, either in words not understood in the sense, in which they are used by the speaker, or before the hearers are prepared to receive it, by having learned other truths necessary previously to be known.

6. It is the sentiment and doctrine of some, that on all disputable points, ministers should preach in scripture language; that this would be a happy way to avoid all disputes in religion; that all public formulas, creeds, confessions and doctrines of faith, should be drawn up in scripture language entirely; that thus christians would be agreed, and dissensions, parties and separations would be at an end. Let us consider this matter. It is said that on *disputable points* ministers should preach in scripture language only. But all the peculiar and the most important doctrines of the gospel are disputable. And shall ministers do nothing toward teaching those doctrines, beside reading the scriptures to their people? All who can read, as all, or almost all among us can, may read them for themselves. Yet the sentiment now under consideration will come to this, that ministers are to do nothing toward public instruction, beside publicly reading the scriptures. For if they must use scripture language only on all the most important subjects, why not on all the less important? What advantage is there in deviating from the words of scripture in the latter case, more than in the former? And if one word, which is not scriptural, may be used in the pulpit, why not another? and where shall we fix the limits?

Besides, this sentiment will not only exclude from the pulpit all words and phrases, which are not used in scripture; but it will confine us to use the words of scripture in the very same order in which they stand in scripture. The design of using the mere language of scripture is, to alter not the sense of it and to avoid all disputes concerning that sense and concerning the doctrines of

christianity. But though we use the words of scripture only, yet if we shift their arrangement, we may alter their sense entirely; and this not only by altering the arrangement of the words of particular sentences; but by selecting and arranging sentences themselves. So that mere using scripture words and phrases, whether in preaching or in our public formulas, will not answer the end intended, unless we preserve the exact order, as well as the words of scripture; that is, unless we merely *read* the scripture.

Some sensible of this consequence of their doctrine, have avowed it with regard to public formulas. But to be consistent, they must avow it with regard to all teaching in religion, and must hold, that there should be no religious instruction, beside the reading of the scriptures.

In defence of this doctrine it has been said, that the language of scripture was chosen by Omniscience, and is therefore the best possible; that it is in vain therefore to attempt to mend or explain it by words of our own choosing; that we might as well attempt to mend any other of the works of God. But all this goes on the ground of the impropriety of our using any other means of religious instruction, than the reading of the scriptures; a ground on which those who use this reasoning, will not dare to rest their cause.

As to the alleged absurdity of explaining the language of scripture, which is said to be equal to an attempt to mend or improve the other *works* of God; I observe, that in a certain sense we may and do daily improve the works of God. No man imagines that there is any impiety or absurdity in clearing and cultivating his lands, or in grinding his grain into meal and making it into bread. Yet there is as much of both impiety and absurdity in either of these, as in explaining by the use of other words, such texts as these: "The plowers have plowed on my back and made long their furrows;" and "He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Though the language of scripture was doubtless the best possible on the whole; yet this does not prove but that other words may be used in a variety of instances, which will better explain the meaning of scripture, at least to many particular persons or societies of men, than the words of scripture themselves. A word or phrase which is very determinate in one place or nation, may be very ambiguous in another. Nor was it possible for Omniscience itself to make a selection of words, which would not be liable to this inconvenience in the present state of mankind, any more than it was possible for omniscience to give a revelation, which could not be abused and perverted by depraved men.

Now, when a word or phrase of scripture is become ambiguous in a particular age or country, there is no absurdity in supposing that this word or phrase should be explained by other words or phrases, which in that age and country are not so ambiguous; though with respect to all ages and all countries, the last supposed words and phrases may not be so clear and useful, as those, which they are used in a particular time and place to explain.

7. Hence we infer that ministers are not bound to preach *plain* things only. This is the idea of some; and that ministers ought never to meddle with things which are not plain. But unless this be so explained, as to be nothing but what all will grant, it can never be supported. If by plain things, be meant things which are already plain and well known to the hearers, then a minister is never to *teach* his people anything; and he is bound to preach so to them, that they shall not, under his preaching, make the least *improvement* in christian knowledge; which is absurd and what no man will undertake to support. But if by *plain things* be meant, things which are capable of being made plain to the hearers, or which, if they will be attentive and candid, may, by the evidence of reason or revelation, be made to appear to be credible and manifest truths; it is granted that in this sense a minister must preach plain things only. But the proposition thus explained, comes to nothing.

8. Also hence we see the absurdity of parents refusing to teach their children any particular sentiments in religion, even those which they themselves believe; and leaving them to judge for themselves, without any such instruction. This is advocated and practised by some, on the pretences, that their children have a right of private judgment in religion and a liberty of conscience; that teaching them any particular religious sentiments would curtail this liberty, would shackle their judgment and their genius, and would prevent improvement. But these reasons, if they prove anything prove too much, and so confute themselves. Children grown to a proper age have a right to judge for themselves in politics, as well as religion. They have a right to judge, whether monarchy or democracy, whether a free or a despotic government be the best. Also they have a right to judge for themselves in morals, whether it be best and obligatory on them, to be temperate and prudent, and to observe truth and justice in their intercourse with their fellow-men. Yet no man will be thought to curtail his son's right of private judgment or his liberty of conscience, by teaching him the principles of true civil liberty, or the moral duties of temperance, prudence, and justice. Nay, our children at a proper age, have a right to judge for themselves what busi-

ness to follow in life and in what manner to carry it on. Yet no man scruples to bring up his son to some particular business. Nor does any man imagine, that he curtails the liberty of his son, by educating him for a scholar, a husbandman or a mechanic. Nor is it ever thought that if parents educate their children to some particular business, they cramp their genius or prevent improvement. On the principle which I am considering, a parent must never teach his son anything. Though he wish to have him a husbandman, he must never teach him the use of the plough or scythe; though he wish to have him a carpenter, he must never teach the use of the saw or chisel; though he wish to have him a scholar, he must never teach him to read or write; for the son has the same right of private judgment concerning the best mode of reading and writing, and of using any kind of utensils, which he has to judge in matters of religion; and teaching him any of the things just mentioned would be as likely to prevent improvement by cramping his genius, as teaching him the principles of christianity.

As these ideas of the education of children are contrary to reason, they are equally contrary to scripture. That commands us to "train up a child in the way he should go," with encouragement that "when he is old, he shall not depart from it," and to "bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Some allow indeed, that children are to be taught that the scriptures are the word of God; but are not to be taught the particular doctrines contained in the scriptures; that as to the meaning and contents of the scriptures, they are to judge entirely for themselves. But why are they not to be taught, as well that the scriptures contain such and such particular doctrines, as that the scriptures themselves are the word of God? They have the same right of private judgment in the one of these cases as the other. To teach our children, that the scriptures are the word of God, and not to teach them any of the particular doctrines of scripture, is like carefully teaching them that a certain volume contains the laws of our country; but at the same time cautiously avoiding to teach them any of the laws which are contained in that volume; or teaching them, that husbandry is the best business of life; yet not teaching them anything in particular concerning husbandry.

9. If ministers be bound to teach the truths and doctrines of the gospel; people are bound to attend, to hear and learn those truths. If ministers be bound to take great pains to teach, people are bound to take correspondent pains to learn and to acquire knowledge. These duties mutually imply each other, and it is absurd to separate them.

For the same reasons people are bound to seek for a minister who will *instruct* them; and divine grace, though essential to the character of a good minister of Jesus Christ, is not sufficient to constitute that character. It is necessary that he be "able to teach others also."

I shall now close this discourse with an address, first to the pastor elect, and then to the church and society in this place.

I. To the pastor elect.

My dear sir,—I have endeavored to represent the importance and necessity of preaching the truth; and have done it with a special reference to you. We who are in the ministry are always liable to temptation, as in other respects, so in faithfully preaching the truth. And the very circumstance, which in itself is so agreeable, that there is so great and cordial an unanimity among this people, with respect to your settlement among them, may increase your temptation. It may make you more remiss in your studies and more negligent in faithfully declaring the truth. It may put you off your guard, and thus you may expose yourself and expose the cause of truth. It may be an occasion of a presumptuous conduct or mode of preaching; or on the other hand, it may be the occasion of making you excessively compliant, so as to suppress important and useful truth, in order to preserve the present peace and unanimity. I beseech you to avoid all these, "to hold fast the form of sound words once delivered to the saints," and not to be seduced from them by any temptation. Yet preach the truth prudently and with circumspection. All things that are lawful, are not expedient. Beware of preaching so as to be misunderstood by the use of terms, to which your people have affixed ideas different from your own. Dwell not perpetually on a few favorite topics. All evangelical truth is divine; all is useful.

That you may thus preach, read extensively. "Beware of the man who reads but one book," is an old and sensible observation. By reading extensively you will see not only what truth others have taught, but what errors they have taught, and the reasons with which they have endeavored to support those errors. Thus you will know how the better to guard against those errors, and to illustrate the contrary truth.

You are to teach the truth not only in the pulpit, but day by day in your walk and conversation. Thus not only you will show, that you believe what you preach, but you will add force to it.

You, as well as ministers in general, will have great need of prudence in all your conduct, and of keeping the entire mastery of yourself. "He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that

taketh a city." In cases of opposition (and you may have opposition, notwithstanding the present happy appearance) the greatest danger is from ourselves. If we do not keep under our passions and feelings, our enemies will not fail to take the advantage of us. This therefore, in case of opposition, you are to expect; and the consequence may be fatal to your comfort and usefulness in this place, and detrimental to the cause of truth in general. But if agreeably to our Lord's direction, you be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove; if you preach the truth faithfully and feel and live accordingly, you may hope for a blessing on your ministry. But however this may be, you will be accepted and approved by the great shepherd of the sheep, who will say to you at last, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

II. I am to address myself in a very few words to this church and society.

MEN AND BRETHREN,—You have heard what has been said to your pastor elect and the exhortation to him, to preach the truth. If he be bound to preach the truth, you are bound to hear, receive and obey it. If he shall faithfully preach it, he will be accepted by his God and Judge, whether you hear or forbear. You are now to have another pastor set over you in the Lord. This is one of the gifts which Christ has received and which he dispenses in consequence of his ascension; and you are accountable for the manner in which you shall improve by this gift. Your pastor is to be a watchman on this part of the walls of Jerusalem, to give warning to you. If he shall faithfully warn you and you shall not hear nor regard, your blood will be on your own heads. But if you shall hear and comply, you shall live. Therefore take heed how you hear. "Incline your ear and come unto Christ. Hear and your souls shall live; and he will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David."

SERMON XIII.

THE MINISTER'S PARTING COUNSEL.*

2 Corinthians 13: 2. — *Finally, brethren, farewell: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

Corinth was a famous city of Greece, in which the gospel was introduced and established by the apostle Paul. There he exercised his ministry for a year and six months at one time, besides his occasional visits afterward. And there that ministry was attended with great success. All this appears, as from other passages in the New Testament, so particularly from Acts 18: 9, 10, 11, "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace. For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." To this church planted by the apostle himself, he wrote two epistles, of which this from which our text is taken is the last. At the close of this epistle, he takes his final leave of this church, in the affecting words of the text. As if he had said, And now, brethren, after all my acquaintance with you, which has been mutually so agreeable and profitable; after all my labors among you, which God has been pleased so greatly to bless; and after my repeated visits and epistles to you; I bid you an affectionate and final farewell. I ardently wish you prosperity in every respect; and particularly that you may "be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and then the God of love and peace shall be with you."

What I propose in this discourse, is to consider the several parts of this farewell of the apostle, to the Corinthians.

I. *He wishes them to be perfect.*

We are not to understand here absolute, sinless perfection. This is not attainable in this life. "There is not" even "a just

* A Farewell Sermon to the people of Colebrook, preached July 14, 1799, and printed at the request of the hearers.

man upon earth; that doeth good and sinneth not," Eccles. 7: 20. "And who can say, I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin," Prov. 20: 9. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one," Job 14: 4. But if any man has attained to perfection in this life, he is a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not; he is pure from his sin; he is a clean thing brought out of an unclean; in direct contradiction to the scriptures just quoted.

If any person ever has attained to perfection in this life, we may surely suppose, that some of the saints mentioned in scripture, were favored with this privilege. Therefore let us search for perfection among the most distinguished saints of both the Old Testament and the New. Noah, Daniel and Job are in scripture mentioned as eminent saints and as peculiarly beloved of God. Let us attend to them distinctly. Noah, though distinguished from the rest of the world in being saved from the flood and in being employed as a preacher of righteousness to the old world, and though in the main he walked with God, yet was overtaken with gross intemperance, as you cannot but remember. Job was indeed an eminently good man, so that there was none like him in all the earth, and for a long time he persevered in his patience, under various most distressing afflictions, brought on him in a rapid succession, and for a long time he conducted himself in the most humble and pious manner, "falling down to the ground and worshipping;" saying, "naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord." And when he was insulted by his own wife, because he still retained his integrity, and refused to curse God and die, he made the following most proper and pious answer: "What? shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil." Yet to show, that there is no man upon earth, though really just and upright, who liveth and sinneth not, Job at last had his patience exhausted, so that he "opened his mouth and cursed his day."

With regard to Daniel, though no particular gross sin is in scripture recorded concerning him, yet we have no reason to suppose that he was more perfect than the other two saints, with whom he is classed in scripture, as a distinguished favorite of God. Abraham was the father of the faithful, and the friend of God; yet he was not sinless; he fell into polygamy and lived in it for a long time. As to David, in general a man after God's own heart, you know the great sins into which he fell. Moses was a distinguished saint, and the meekest of men; yet he trans-

gressed at the waters of Meribah, so that he was shut out of the good land.

But let us come to the New Testament. The eleven apostles, from their constant attendance on the preaching and miracles of our Lord, and from their daily conversation and intimate intercourse with him, were under great advantages for christian edification. Yet they fell short of perfection. For when the multitudes from the chief priests and elders, came with swords and staves, to take Jesus, his disciples "all forsook him and fled." Paul was the great apostle of the gentiles, was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles;" was "a chosen vessel to God, to bear his name before the gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel;" and appears to have done more to spread the gospel in the world, than any of the other apostles; yet according to his own testimony, he came short of perfection. His language is, Phil. 3: 12—15, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This you see is an express confession of his own imperfection. The same thing is manifest from this, that when the apostle, "would do good, evil was present with him;" and that "he had a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, which was in his members." This surely is not the description of a perfect man. If it should be said, as it has been, that the apostle is here describing his state before his conversion and not after; I answer, that in the same context, and even in the next words he declares, that he "delighted in the law of God, after the inward man;" and that "with the mind he served the law of God;" which no unconverted man does; because "the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." And if it were otherwise; if an unconverted man could delight in the law of God, after the inward man, he could and would of course delight in God himself, and love him sincerely. And if he could serve the law of God; he would of course serve God himself. And what is there more difficult in any part of religion, or more distinguishing of its truth and genuineness, than the sincere love and service of the law and of God himself? Indeed this is the root of all true religion and virtually constitutes the whole.

Thus we have taken a view of the most eminent saints of scripture, and find none among them all, who profess to have attained to perfection; and concerning most of them, we find evident proofs of imperfection. They manifestly fell short of sinless perfection. But if this be so, it may be said; if sinless perfection be not attainable in this life, what does the apostle mean in our text; when he exhorts the Corinthians to be *perfect?*

I answer, he doubtless means the same as is intended, when it is said of Job, that "he was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." By what has been already observed, it appears, that Job was not sinlessly perfect, as he *cursed his day.* It must mean therefore, that he was a truly good man, a sincere servant of God, a real saint. In the same sense we are told, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This means either the same sincerity, to which Job attained, or a perfection of furniture, a being *thoroughly furnished* to all good works; and the latter clause may be understood as explanatory of the former. In this sense the apostle Paul, after his express renunciation of perfection, as to himself; yet assumes it to himself and some of his fellow christians; as you may see in Phil. 3: 15, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you;" plainly showing, that the apostle uses the word perfection in a very different sense, when he assumes it to himself, from that in which he had used it, when he renounced it.

Therefore when the apostle in the text exhorts us to be perfect, he exhorts as to the perfection of Job, to the integrity and sincerity of vital christianity; he exhorts us to live up to our profession, to live in character, to be real and exemplary christians.

II. *The apostle tells the Corinthians, to be of good comfort.*

Good comfort naturally follows from the perfection before described. If we be real christians, humble penitents and cordial believers in Christ; if we live in character, and make proper proficiency in our christian course, leading an exemplary life, so as to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior; no doubt we shall enjoy comforts. There is peace and comfort in the very exercise of christian grace. The carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. Therefore so long as we are in our native state of depravity, we are in a state of warfare and opposition to God. The carnal or native mind of man is opposition itself to God; and such a temper of mind is direct-

ly opposed to peace and comfort. "The wicked," says Isaiah, "are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." But no sooner is the heart changed by divine grace, than instead of enmity, reconciliation, submission, and cordial and supreme love to God are introduced and established in it. Of course then it enjoys peace and comfort. Cordial submission and reconciliation are in their very nature placid, peaceful and comfortable.

And as peace and comfort are implied in the first exercises of the new convert; so they increase as he increases in grace. The very knowledge of God, of his law and of divine truth, affords him delight and comfort, and the more his knowledge is increased, the more are his delight and comfort increased. The same may be said of his increase in humility, submission to God, complacency in him, faith in Christ, and every other grace. The very existence of sanctification in any person, and especially as it will produce good fruit both in heart and life, is attended with comfort and happiness. "The ways of wisdom are," in their own nature, "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace."

Besides this, sanctification is the evidence of our justification, and in this view is attended with additional comfort. You are not to imagine, my brethren, that you are to obtain evidence of your pardon and justification, by any immediate revelation from heaven, by any suggestion thrown into your mind, that you are pardoned and accepted by God; or by any text of scripture brought to your thoughts however suddenly, unexpectedly and undesignedly by yourselves. All such grounds of comfort and belief that you are pardoned, are delusive. The word of God gives not the least warrant to trust to them. Where in all the scripture, do you find it said, that they who have an involuntary suggestion, that they are converted and pardoned, are in reality converted and pardoned. Where do you find it said, He that has a text of scripture unexpectedly coming to his mind, importing that his sins are forgiven, is really forgiven of God? The scriptural evidences of conversion and forgiveness, are such as these: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved;" "repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;" "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me;" "Hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts;" "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;" "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;" "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you." These

evidences imply santification of heart and life; and to depend on anything else, than what implies sanctification as an evidence of our justification, is unwarrantable and delusive.

I have insisted the more particularly on this, because it has pleased the great Head of the church graciously to visit you with the effusions of his Holy Spirit, hopefully to bring some of you to the saving knowledge of the truth, and to awaken and convice others; and to be informed what is the proper evidence of a real conversion, is at such a time peculiarly necessary. I wish you to apply what I have now said on this subject to the faithful and candid trial of yourselves.

To be perfect, then, in the sense already described, affords comfort, not only as it implies a placid and peaceful temper of mind toward God, complacency in God, etc. but as it affords evidence, and the only real evidence, of our acceptance with God, and of our sure title, by the promises of the gospel, to the future eternal inheritance of heaven and glory.

This must certainly be a great source of comfort to every christian. Thus he enjoys peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. On his part he is at peace with God, as by regeneration his heart is reconciled to God and subjected to his will; and God on his part is at peace with him, as for Christ's sake he is reconciled to him, pardons his sins, adopts him and makes him an heir of himself. What a source of comfort must these things be to the real christian!

Besides, in this way he enjoys peace of conscience. Just so far as a man is sanctified, sin, the very foundation of the accusations of an angry conscience, is prevented or removed; and in consequence of sanctification, the foundation of accusing and condemning himself as an enemy to God, a rejecter of Christ, and an unconverted sinner, is removed; therefore in the same respects, he has a foundation to enjoy peace of conscience and comfort in his own mind.

Nor is this all; the true christian is comforted by all the promises of the gospel, that Christ will never leave nor forsake any of his real disciples; that he will be with them always, that he will so defend them that none shall be able to pluck them out of his hand; that he will support and protect his church even to the end of the world, so that the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against it; that he will increase and promote true religion in the world; that Satan's kingdom shall be overthrown; that Christ shall generally reign on the earth, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high God; that the whole earth

shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas; and that finally the kingdom of grace, which took its original from heaven, shall be transplanted to heaven, its native soil, and shall there eternally flourish in perfect rest, peace, holiness, and happiness, to the glory of God the Father.

All these considerations are replete with comfort to real christians. No wonder then they are exhorted to be of good comfort. They have reason for comfort, under the greatest afflictions and persecutions, that ever they are called to endure.

III. *The apostle exhorts the Corinthians to be of one mind.* This is of great importance in every community, and especially in every christian church or society. They ought to be of one mind in several respects.

1. As to their *articles of faith.* Articles of faith, or at best articles of infidelity, will naturally govern the temper and practice. He who believes there is no God, will not love and worship him. He who believes that Christ is not the Savior, will not trust in him for salvation. He who believes not in a future state of rewards and punishments, will not prepare for it. He who believes not the gospel to be true, will not be anxious to comply with it. He who believes that there is nothing in religion, will not embrace, love, and practise it. If then any people be not of one mind in these respects, how can they walk together?

Or if they differ in things on which the very existence of all religion does not depend; still even this diversity of sentiment produces discord and is very hurtful. For instance, if some believe the total depravity of human nature, but others believe that we naturally have some good principles in us; if some believe the sovereignty of divine grace, that God has a right to cast off all men, and would do them no injustice if he should make them eternally miserable; while others believe either that no man deserves eternal misery, or that those who are moral and attend on the means of grace, ought not to be finally rejected; if some believe the entire and total dependence of man upon God, and his grace; while others think we have *a self-determining power* in our wills, which is entirely sufficient for repentance and all the exercises of religion; if some believe the great importance, usefulness and necessity of public worship on the sabbath; while others think they can spend the sabbath as profitably at their own homes; if some believe in the necessity and indispensable obligation of a virtuous and pious education of their children, while others are impressed with no such ideas; if some believe themselves bound to submit cheerfully to the expense necessary to support both the public worship of the sabbath, and the schools

necessary for the due education of their children, but others grudge every part of this expense; you cannot but see, that this diversity of sentiment must work disorder and confusion, and finally, tend to the ruin of any society.

2. They ought to be of one mind in their *aims and ends.* What if some aim at the glory of God, others at their own glory and applause? What if some aim at the promotion of true religion and the interest of Christ, and others, at the promotion of their own interest merely? What if some are willing to deny themselves and their own interest or applause, for the sake of Christ and his cause, but others set up themselves as supreme, and make religion itself subservient to their private ends? It is manifest, that the religious concerns of such a people cannot proceed with success. As soon as ever religion proves not to be subservient to their applause, their ambition or their private ends, a part of them forsake and oppose it; they oppose therewith christianity and oppose Christ himself. And how can we expect any good to the cause of religion and virtue, in such a course of things as this? This shows the necessity of being of one mind.

3. It is equally necessary that a people be united in their *measures* to support or promote religion. Suppose all the individuals of any community are agreed to aim at the divine glory and the advancement of virtue and piety; yet if they pursue different paths and take different measures, to secure these ends; if one be of Paul, and another of Apollos; if while all are wishing to settle a minister, one choose to settle this man and another that, and each be fixed in his own measures; what can be done in this case? The great end will doubtless be lost.

In these things there must be mutual condescension; and in the case now described there can be condescension. It is supposed, that all are seeking the same end; and when the generality are agreed in the measures to secure this end; for instance, the settlement of a particular minister; and wise men in the society and out of it, judge it best for the society, that he should be settled; in this case one or two individuals should rather condescend and fall in with the wishes of the society in general, than that the society should submit to them, or be broken in pieces. Unless there be condescension in some such cases, no people can enjoy peace and success in their religious concerns.

IV. *The apostle exhorts the Corinthians to live in peace.*

Peace follows of course from what the apostle had before enjoined. There is no danger that they who agree in the articles of their faith and religious sentiments, in their aims and ends, and in their measures to obtain those ends; will fall into contention

concerning religion. And how happy is religious peace! How comfortable to the church and society! How comfortable to their minister! How favorable to the advancement of the knowledge of the truth, to the love and practice of it, and to the increase of true and real religion! On the contrary, how disagreeable is it to live in contention! How uncomfortable to the church, to the society and to the minister! How unfavorable to the increase of religious knowledge, virtue and piety! It is directly opposed to both morality and piety, and cannot proceed from them, but from the want of them; or rather from that which is directly opposed to them. "Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even from your lusts which war against the spirit?"

But however uncomfortable and hurtful contention is, we may expect it, unless we be of one mind in the forementioned respects. If every one be strenuous for his own peculiar opinions, his own ends and his own measures, there can be no peace in any society. And there is great danger of this from various causes. One source of danger is the natural liberty and independence of man. As every blessing and privilege is capable of abuse, so this is true with regard to personal liberty. As men feel themselves free and in many repects independent, some are apt to indulge this independence in adopting peculiar opinions, and in pursuing peculiar ends and peculiar measures. Some from vanity affect singularity. They wish to distinguish themselves, and they cannot do it any other way so easily as by setting up for peculiar opinions, ends or measures. Thus they affect to show themselves wiser than other men. The head of a party is always distinguished, and to be in such a situation is flattering to human vanity. From this motive some put themselves at the head of a party however erroneous; and to gratify their ambition, they will rend the society to which they belong in pieces, and destroy all peace, all order, and all good.

V. *On certain conditions, the apostle promises the Corinthians, that the God of love and peace would be with them.*

The conditions are, that they be perfect, of good comfort, of one mind, and that they live in peace. And if we comply with these conditions, God will be with us in several respects.

1. He will be with us by the *presence of his grace* in our hearts. All who comply with those conditions, are truly gracious persons, are the subjects of divine grace communicated in sanctification, by the spirit of God, and God by his grace and Holy Spirit habitually dwells in them. In this respect he never leaves them nor forsakes them, but is with them to the end of their lives.

2. If we comply with the forementioned conditions, God will be with us, in the way of *divine consolation.* This is the natural consequence of the former particular. It is implied in what has been already said, that divine grace is comforting in its very nature, as it implies love to God, to the law of God, and to our Lord Jesus Christ; as it implies faith, truth and hope in Christ, and as it implies love to mankind; all which are agreeable, pleasant and comforting emotions. That it is comforting, as it implies the subduing of native depravity, which is ever turbulent and opposed to peace and comfort; and as it gives evidence of future grace and support here, and of eternal glory hereafter.

3. On the same conditions God will be with us in the way of *protection.* He will keep us even as the apple of his eye; he will never leave us nor forsake us, and never deliver us up into the hands of our spiritual foes, who seek our ruin. As he really is, so he will act as the captain of our salvation, and afford us the most effectual aid, in times of need. Nay, he will make all things to work together for our good; for this is his express promise to them that love God. And though we may fall into various temporal evils, from these we shall be recovered, and those evils themselves shall be made to work together for our good.

4. God will be with us to build us up in *faith and holiness.* "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We need the same communications of grace to build us up in holiness, as in the first instance to regenerate our hearts; and this we shall receive on the conditions specified in the text.

5. God will be with us, to *prepare us for glory* and to *receive us to it.* He will never suffer any who are once the subjects of grace, to fail of glory. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; and whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I shall now apply these general observations to the present occasion. For several years past, I have been with you laboring in the ministry, endeavoring to instruct you in the great and most

important doctrines of the gospel, to inculcate its duties, to excite you to the practice of them, and to warn you against every error, sin and vice. My connection with you has been peaceful, agreeable, and of late I hope successful. I expected to continue and spend the rest of my days with you. And as the proposal of my leaving you was no object of my seeking; so it has been attended with great anxiety concerning my duty. As the best expedient in the case, and the most likely means of obtaining light as to the way of duty, the whole question concerning my removal has, as you well know, been submitted to a council mutually agreeable to us both. You know the result of the council; it was their unanimous opinion, that it was my duty to accept the call, which invites me to leave you, and your duty to acquiesce.

Had they decided, that I ought to continue with you, I should have complied with their decision, in a conviction, that in that case, I should enjoy far more ease; more leisure, more retirement and more opportunity to prosecute my favorite study of theology, to indulge many agreeable propensities and to enjoy many of my most agreeable friends, whose society must be lost by my removal. And now that they have decided it to be my duty to accept a call to a distant place, I feel myself obliged to comply with their decision, though with great reluctance to leaving this dear people, especially at the present juncture, at which it has pleased the great Head of the church to afford his influences among us; and in the prospect of labor, anxiety, responsibility and perhaps difficulty, in the undertaking to which I am invited. Yet since it is by proper judges decided to be my duty, I shall take upon me this arduous service, and discharge the obligations of it, according to my best ability, looking to God to assist and support me.

Since we must part, what is more proper, than we part as Paul, and the Corinthians did? After the example of the great apostle of the gentiles, I do certainly most ardently wish you to be perfect, to be of good comfort, to be of one mind and to live in peace; and that you may be animated so to do, by the motive, that then the God of love and peace shall be with you.

You have heard what has been said concerning the necessity of unanimity and peace among yourselves. And I dare say you realize it. Formerly, you experienced the ill effects of dissensions. Let this your experience warn and guard you against everything of the like kind in future. "Remembering your affliction and your misery, the wormwood and the gall; let your soul still have them in remembrance, and be humbled in you." Let me beseech you to withstand the beginning of dissension. It is

"like the letting out of water; once let out, it is hard to be stopped again, and the longer it runs, the deeper and wider channel it wears, therefore leave off contention before it is meddled with."

Your union among yourselves, as well as your kind treatment of me, since I have been connected with you, has been a source of happiness to me. I shall always remember you with affection, gratitude and kindest benevolence. It is a most happy circumstance, that since we must part, we part not only with peace, but with entire mutual friendship. This is a singular case of the dismission of a minister from his people. That you have acted in this whole affair with so much candor, with so many and so unequivocal testimonies of affection to me, and regard to the council which has dissolved our connection, has been often noticed to your honor. I hope the mutual friendship, which has uninterruptedly subsisted between us, will ever continue, and that we shall sincerely remember each other in our prayers.

As your minister is now about to leave you, I sincerely pray and hope that in due time God will send you a good minister of Jesus Christ a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; and that under his faithful ministry much people may be added unto the Lord. And as it has pleased God lately to visit you with the influences of his Holy Spirit, to the revival of true religion among you; I presume you will not be contented to live long, without so important a blessing, as a christian minister. If you have tasted, that the Lord is gracious, you will not be willing to live without the preaching of the gospel and stated worship on the sabbath. As new born babes you will desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.

I hope, brethren, that in settling a minister, you will be attentive to two things, that he be sound in the faith, and that as far as you can judge, he be a man of true piety. If he be not sound in the faith, he will lead you and your children into error and false religion; and this error and false religion will naturally descend to future generations, and may prove fatal to thousands. And if he be not a man of true piety, with what sincerity can he act in any part of his ministry? As he will not be friendly to Christ or his cause, he will not relish the truth, nor heartily engage to promote it. If he do not directly oppose true religion, which is the most favorable supposition; still being a blind leader of the blind, he and his hearers will be likely both to fall into the ditch.

But if you shall settle a good and faithful minister, you will, so far as you yourselves are rightly disposed, rejoice in him and in his ministrations; you will have peace and be edified in the most

holy faith; and you will have reason to hope, that God will bless his labors among you, and extend the good effects of such a ministry to generations yet unborn.

How happy will you be under such a minister! How happy will all your friends be on your behalf! And how happy shall I be, to hear of your prosperity!

And now, Brethren, I am to take my leave of you. When Paul took leave of the elders of the church of Ephesus, "they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words, which he spake, that "*they should see his face no more.*" How it may be with us, brethren, whether we may ever be permitted to see each other's face again in this world, God only knows. Therefore "finally, brethren, farewell." It is my heart's desire and prayer for you, that you may prosper in all your real interests; that you may prosper in your several lawful secular concerns; that you may prosper as a society, increasing in numbers, wealth, and reputation, and be regarded as a truly respectable people, by all around you; that you may prosper as a church, established in the faith and order of the gospel, receiving "daily additions of such as shall be saved;" and that you may prosper as individuals; that every careless sinner among you may be thoroughly awakened and convinced; that every unregenerate sinner may be renewed by divine grace; and that every real christian may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ;" in one word, that "your souls may be in health and prosper," is my earnest prayer for you.

To this end, let me beseech you all to improve the present favorable opportunity. Now God is shedding down his kind influences among you, to the awakening and conviction of many and the hopeful conversion of some. Now then is a happy opportunity to obtain the grace of God. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Should any of you live through such a time as this, and resist the peculiar and strong motives, which are now exhibited, to become reconciled to God; it is not likely, that the weaker motives of ordinary times will have much effect upon you. But you are in the hands of a sovereign God, to whom you have forfeited every blessing, and who therefore has a right to have mercy upon you, or to leave you to perish in your sins. You are dependent on his sovereign grace. Own this your dependence; and expect help from no other source. Accept the offered grace of God, and lose not that infinite blessing, by neglect or delay.

"Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, which God

hath purchased with his own blood." Take heed, that after my departing grievous wolves do not enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and that of your ownselves men do not arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." "Brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them, which are sanctified." May the God of love and peace be with and bless both you and me respectively; may he watch over, protect and prosper us in our several lawful ways; and may he especially replenish our hearts with his grace and love. And when we shall have served our generation according to his will, may we meet with joy and mutual congratulation before our common judge, be acquitted and accepted by him, and so may we be forever with the Lord.

SERMON XIV.

SUBMISSION TO RULERS.*

ROMANS 13: 1, 2.—*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.*

THE nature of civil government, and the extent and limits of the authority of magistrates, have been so frequently and largely discussed, especially in later times, that scarce anything new concerning them can be said. Still, to be reminded of what is old and has often been said, especially on such important subjects, is by no means without its use. If therefore this shall be all that is done in my present discourse, it will not be in vain.

The sources of argument for the exhibition and confirmation of the truth as to civil government are two, reason and scripture. And of the passages of scripture referred to by writers on the subject, the text is probably the chief. Now it is of great importance that we know the scriptural doctrine on these points. For if God has revealed his mind concerning the nature, extent, and end of civil government, we may be sure that such a revelation is a perfect and infallible rule for us. And as our text is supposed by many to be *the* passage in which above all others God *has* made known his will concerning these things, so we are under peculiar obligation, in our inquiries after truth on these subjects, to attend to it, and to endeavor by all means to possess ourselves of its true meaning and import. This we now propose to do.

The text has been understood very differently by different persons. Some suppose that in it we have a very plain precept, requiring passive obedience and non-resistance to our rulers in all cases, and especially to those in supreme authority. And though such rulers may do what they will; though they oppress us ever so much, and break through all law, and overturn the very foundations of our constitution, and tear from us every right and lib-

* Preached at the annual Freemen's Meeting for voting, etc. 1775. It is published, as being in many respects a curious and interesting "sign of the times" in which it was preached.

erty whether civil or religious; though they plunder our estates, and sport themselves with our very lives, still these persons suppose that we ought not in the least degree to oppose this the wantonness of their tyranny and cruelty, but patiently to submit, and endure it all. Such persons further suppose that the words of the text have a particular reference to those who held civil power in the time of the apostle; that he especially enjoins submission to *them*, though they were some of the most unjust and tyrannical rulers that ever lived; and that, consequently, if christians were then obliged to submit and not resist, they must be obliged to do the same in every other case, as it will rarely happen that they will live under rulers more tyrannical than were the Roman emperors and their subordinate magistrates; and that as even these were ordained of God, and therefore their subjects were obliged to submit to them; so, for the same reason, must all subjects, in all cases, do the same.

On the other hand, it is supposed by some that these words are well capable of another construction, and will not bear this which has been mentioned. They hold that they refer to those civil rulers who rule justly, and according to the laws and constitution of the state; and that the apostle meant to limit what he here says by what follows, where he tells us "that rulers are the ministers of God to us for good; that they are not a terror to good works, but to evil; and that if we do well, we shall have praise of them." It is such rulers only, say they, that the apostle forbids us to resist.

Whether this be the true sense or not, I have not time now to argue. I would only say that it does not appear to me to be the true sense; for I cannot but think these words were intended to teach us the *general* duty of obedience to civil magistrates, without reference to any particular rulers whether Roman emperors or others, and that they were never written with a view to determine the particular bounds and extent of that obedience. It is doubtless true, and is conceded on all hands, that it is our general duty to be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of him. He not only expressly ordained civil magistracy among his ancient people the Jews; but by his providence, and the light of nature, and reason, he has led mankind in general to form themselves into civil societies, under proper rulers, both supreme and subordinate. Whosoever, therefore, shall in ordinary cases resist the established supreme authority, resists the ordinance of God, and is guilty before him.

All must grant that to justify resistance and rebellion against

the ruling powers in any state, there must be some extraordinary reason. So long as the established powers rule according to law, justice, and the constitution, none can pretend that it is lawful to resist them. Nor is *every* violation of law, justice, or the constitution, a sufficient reason of resistance. It must always be considered whether the evil consequences of resistance be not likely to overbalance the good; and then only is resistance justifiable, when the rulers rule tyrannically, and there is also a good prospect that the public good will be promoted, more than injured, by resistance. But whether, even in this case, resistance be justifiable or not, the apostle did not mean expressly to determine. He only gives *the general rules of obedience and submission*, and does not touch, one way or the other, the question I have now presented.

We are to understand this passage in the very same manner as we would any other passages on other subjects, expressed as this is, in general and absolute terms. For instance in Matt. 5: 39, etc. it is said, "But I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." Here our Lord, in express and absolute terms, forbids all resistance to any private person whatsoever, however injuriously and abusively he may treat us, just as the apostle in the text forbids all resistance of the civil powers. But who ever understood these words in the most literal and extensive sense? Who ever supposed that they make it our duty to suffer every ruffian to beat and mangle us as much as he may please? Who ever imagined that our Savior intended to forbid our using means to protect our property from thieves and robbers, or to make us the dupes of every impertinent and assuming villain who should take it into his head to command us to go with him a mile, or to give up our garment to him? I know, indeed, that the Quakers rest upon this passage their doctrine of abstaining from all violence. Yet I question whether there is a soul among them, who, if he were violently smitten on the one cheek, would patiently turn the other to receive a second blow, or who would think he was in duty bound so to do.

The truth is, that in this passage, all resistance in case of private assault or injury, is as much forbidden, as all resistance of the supreme power is forbidden in the text. Nor is there anything left on record, in any other part of the New Testament, to justify such resistance in the one case more than in the other.

Yet the words quoted, you will all grant, are not to be taken in the literal sense. You all hold that they only contain the general rules of patience and gentleness under the greatest private abuses, and teach us that we should not be forward to resist and retaliate injuries, but should rather, as a general rule, patiently suffer wrong. And why may we not—why ought we not, to put the same construction on these words of the apostle? Plainly we may; for there is no more difficulty attending the construction in the one case than the other.

In the same universal terms the apostle enjoins upon servants obedience to their masters. Col. 3: 22, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." What words could be more comprehensive and universal? Yet no man will hold that they are to be taken in their most extensive and literal sense. For in some cases we know, and the apostles have taught us that we ought to obey God rather than man. Nor will any hold that servants are obliged to obey their masters in all things which are not of a religious nature, and wherein the rights of conscience are not immediately concerned. Suppose any of you were taken captive by our neighboring savages, and by them held in a state of servitude, and that by resisting your master you might regain your liberty and return to your family and friends; would you in this case feel yourself conscientiously bound by this precept, still to continue to obey your master in all things, and to forego the opportunity to escape? No; never! And yet there is no more reason why we should put such a construction upon our text than upon this passage.

Another instance that I would mention is recorded in Matt. 5: 34, etc., "But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." And to the same effect is James 5: 12, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation." Now in these passages, all swearing is peremptorily and absolutely forbidden, as all resistance of the higher powers is in the text. Yet we all understand the former with some limitation; and for aught that appears the same limitation may as reasonably be put on the text, as upon these passages. As in these passages we suppose our Lord and the apostles only meant to teach us that in general we ought to

be cautious of swearing; that we ought never to use an oath on common and trivial occasions; and especially that we ought never to swear profanely, as was so frequently done both among the Jews and the heathen; so, with the same reason, we may suppose that the apostle, in our text, only meant to teach the general duty of submission, and the sin of resistance in ordinary cases, without at all intending to touch the question whether resistance may not, in some cases, be lawful.

That the interpretation thus given of the text is the true one, I think we may gather from the immediate context. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is a minister of God to thee for good, but a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." They who suppose that these words contain an absolute prohibition of all resistance of the supreme power, must, at the same time, hold that the character here given of civil rulers applies to all rulers without exception; for no reason can be given why the word "rulers" in the third verse should be less extensive than the words "higher powers" in the first. And such persons actually do hold, that what is said in the first and second verses, had a special and direct reference to the rulers who were in power when the apostle wrote; and therefore they must also hold that what is said in the third and fourth verses, has the same reference to these rulers. But this is impossible, because with reference to them it was not true. It was by no means the true character of those rulers, that they were a terror to evil works, and not to good; and that if a man did that which was good, he should certainly have praise of them, or that they were the ministers of God to christians for good, or that they were revengers to execute wrath upon the evil. Their true character, in general, was quite the reverse of all this. Whereas if we understand the words in the sense that has now been given, no such difficulty occurs. The apostle lays down the general duty of submission and obedience; and as a reason of it states the end of the institution of civil government and of the appointment of civil rulers, which is, to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise and a recompense to those that do well.

There are several other things that make it still further plain that such must be the true construction of this passage. It seems very evident from the whole New Testament, that neither Christ nor his apostles intended to intermeddle in any curious questions or disputes upon politics. Our Lord with indignation rejected the thought of being a judge and a divider over the people. And

agreeably to this, he ever conducted himself in his teaching and his conversation, both in public and private. While in general terms he taught mankind their duty, he ever very carefully avoided any nice disquisitions on political topics; and even when the Jews, with all their craft endeavored to draw out his opinion concerning the paying of tribute, he utterly evaded the question, merely telling them, in general, to "render unto Caesar, the things that are Caesar's, and unto God, the things that are God's." He might easily have told them in express terms, whether they were in duty bound to pay tribute, and to submit to such a tyrannical prince as Caesar; and so the apostle might easily have told us, in the text, whether in any case, it is lawful to resist the higher powers. With the same ease, too, he might have told us whether it be lawful ever to resist any private person who shall assault us, or rob us of our property; or whether it ever be lawful to protect our property and seek satisfaction for injuries in a legal way. But for wise reasons, no doubt, Christ and his spirit have passed over these matters in silence, only teaching us our *general* duty, and leaving particular cases, which are endless in their variety of circumstances, to be determined by the light of of these general rules, and of natural reason.

That the apostle did not mean to teach that it is *never* lawful to resist the higher powers, is further manifest from various things mentioned in the scriptures, to one or two of which I would briefly advert. Barely alluding to the army that David raised to resist Saul if it should be needful, and which he did, so far as we know, with God's approbation, I pass to notice more particularly the revolt of the ten tribes from Rehoboam. The people of Israel having suffered much under the grievous yoke of Solomon, determined to effect a reformation in the government. For this purpose they made proposals to Rehoboam. And when he rejected them with disdain, and treating them with contempt even threatened them with more grievous burdens than they had borne under Solomon, the ten tribes, with one consent revolted, and set up another king Jeroboam. Yet they are never once blamed for this conduct. On the contrary, when Rehoboam was about to make war upon them to recover his dominion, God utterly forbade him, saying, "*This thing is from me.*" Yet I know not that *this* was any more from God than any other rebellion against a tyrannical prince whom God in his providence may permit and prosper; for though in this case by a prophet he had foretold the event, yet he had given the ten tribes no permission in this way to accomplish the prediction; and a mere prediction never justifies any action which otherwise would have been criminal. Now

can we suppose that the scriptures are so inconsistent with themselves as to teach in one place that resistance to rulers is never lawful, while in other cases they contain those plain facts which so evidently of themselves justify resistance in some cases, and that without an intimation that it was not pleasing to God ?

I might further argue the same thing from the people's resistance of Saul when determined to destroy Jonathan ; from his servants' refusing to obey in slaying the priests of the Lord; from the case of the Egyptian midwives ; from David's war with Ishbosheth ; from his joining the Philistines against Saul ; from the conspiracies against Joash and Amaziah, which seem to be mentioned with approbation, or at least without disapprobation ; from the frequent revolts of the Israelites from under the dominion of the Philistines and other nations, by whom they had been as really conquered as by the Romans in the times of our Savior ; and also from the brave and vigorous resistance of the Maccabees and their adherents, to Antiochus Epiphanes and the other kings of Syria, which is spoken of approvingly by the prophets.

But passing by these things in the Old Testament, I would mention one or two things in the New which are worthy of our notice. The first is the direction of our Lord to his disciples, when they were persecuted in one city to flee to another. Now fleeing from under the government of a prince is one kind of resistance ; for if the generality of his subjects or all of them should flee, this would as effectually break up his government and dethrone him as a universal rebellion. The other case is where the apostle Peter says, in his first epistle, " submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake ; whether it be to the king, as supreme ; or unto governors, as unto those that are sent by him." It ought to have been translated, " submit yourselves to every " *creature of man ;*" for so it is in the original— the words being " *ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει.*" So that the apostle here declares all civil rulers, whether supreme or subordinate to be " creatures of men." But if they be the creatures of men, surely men have a right to resist or even to unmake and annihilate them, if they rule not according to the will of God and the good of the subject.

Thus I have endeavored briefly to lay before you the scriptural views concerning resistance of civil rulers. The arguments from reason respecting the matter I have not even hinted at, as this was beside my present purpose.

Upon the whole I think we may justly infer that the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance are not the doctrines of the Bible, and that non-resistance to the supreme powers is no

more taught in the scriptures, than non-resistance to our fellow men, and even to thieves, robbers, and those who use the most abusive violence. I hope, therefore, that our text, and some other passages of scripture, all of which are to be taken in the same sense, will no more be quoted to prove and sustain the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, especially in times like these. The truth is, and the whole spirit of scripture sustains it, that rulers are bound to rule in the fear of God and for the good of the people; and if they do not, then in resisting them we are doing God service.

Having now finished what it was proposed to say directly upon this subject, I shall be expected to say something to the freemen present, with respect to the immediate business of the day. And since it has become customary upon this occasion to point out to the freemen what should be the character of the men for whom they shall vote, and whom they shall now choose for rulers, I am willing to comply with the custom, and also to show mine opinion.

1. In the first place, then, as you ought always on this anniversary to make choice of those only to rule over you, who are real friends to your country and its constitution, so you ought to be especially careful in this day when the rights, the liberty, and the peace of our country are so immediately threatened. One man who is not a friend to the rights and liberty of his country, now chosen to any office in the civil government, may do more harm than ten good men in the same office can do good. Now in the light of enemies to our country I think we may fairly consider those who themselves reject the result of the late Continental Congress, and the similar votes and proceedings of our own House of Representatives, and who not only do this, but also endeavor to stir up a party to oppose them. Agreeably to this general rule, you ought by no means to choose a man who says that the plan adopted by the Congress is altogether wrong, and that if we ever obtain relief, it must be in a way entirely different, viz. by barely petitioning the king and parliament. Brethren, you have reason to resent such speeches as these, not only as they tend to divide the country in this critical juncture, and thereby make us an easy prey to our enemies, but also as they are utterly contradictory to your own sentiments expressed in your public votes. You have almost unanimously voted your approbation of the result of the late Congress, a result which we doubt not time will show was most wisely ordered and brought about by Divine Providence for his own glory and the freedom and prosperity of this people. For you therefore to promote men to civil

rule, who publicly declare their disapprobation of that result, is to act a part very inconsistent and very unwise.

2. For the same reason you ought by no means to vote for a man who declares "that he considers the citizens of Boston not as suffering in the common cause of American liberty, but as suffering the fruits of their own folly and rashness." Such speeches have been made, and by some who would like to be chosen to office. But you ought to mark such men, and show your disapprobation of their sentiments and your love for your country, by refusing to give them your votes. Our Congress have abundantly declared that they consider Boston as suffering in the common cause of American rights and liberty; and so it most manifestly is. He therefore, that declares the contrary, does not agree with the Congress, nor with the manifest interests of the country; nor can you vote for such a man without declaring your disagreement with that same Congress, whose result you have publicly and solemnly adopted as your own, and your disregard for the best interests of your country.

3. Nor ought you to vote for those who speak contemptuously of the late law of our Assembly so necessary to put us in a posture of self-defence; who either say, that it was foolish to make any such law, and that it is the most easy thing in the world for Great Britain to subdue this country; or who say, that they never were for these armings and trainings of the soldiers; that all the burden comes upon the farmers; that they must pay the expenses of the soldiers' training, and also must train themselves; and that they must go to Boston, and expose their lives in battle, for that gentlemen, and particularly the gentlemen of the Assembly never expected to go there or anywhere else to fight. Of such persons I might observe, that he that is not willing, if need be, to defend his liberty, deserves to be a slave. But without dwelling on this, I would especially say, that the manifest tendency of all such speeches is to disaffect the minds of the people towards our General Assembly, and to raise in them a spirit of jealousy towards those whom these men call gentlemen; and such a sower of discord among the people, especially in such a day as this, when so much depends upon our unanimity, ought to be frowned upon with indignation by every friend to the people and the country.

4. Once more, let me caution you against giving your votes for a man who being a farmer himself, and a known candidate for office, goes round among the farmers and tells them that it is by all means best for them to send a farmer to the Assembly, and not one that lives in the town or city. Such bare-faced impudence is intolerable! I am astonished at it! And he must be short-

sighted indeed, who cannot see through it. As well might such a one say, "gentlemen, I would have you vote for me. I am the fittest one in town to be sent as your representative. Let *me* have your votes." Again I say, I am astonished at such impudence; and those who are guilty of it ought to be ashamed of it! This, I know, is plain speaking; but the occasion calls for it. And if any should think I have spoken too plainly, I would only say, that it is the business of ministers to tell men their sins; and he is unworthy of his office who has not the firmness to do it.

5. Finally; I would observe that we of this town, by some means or other, are become the objects of suspicion to many of our neighbors of the other towns about us. They suspect that we are not sincere and hearty friends to the cause of American liberty. This day we have a fair opportunity to remove this suspicion, by unanimously choosing men to represent us in the next legislature, who are known, and who on all occasions have appeared themselves to be, not only men of integrity and ability, but also hearty friends of the rights and liberties of their country, and steady opposers of every encroachment on these rights. But if we shall this day make choice of men, who are known either now to be, or to have been, in time past, opposed to the rights and liberty of their country, and advocates for the rights of the British parliament to tax us; or if we even choose men whose characters in this respect are doubtful, we shall, in either of these cases, confirm the suspicions of our neighbors, and fix upon ourselves the character which many have already, without sufficient reason, attributed to us, of being friends to parliamentary taxation, and enemies to our country. Let us bear in mind what may be our influence, and what are our high responsibilities, and so act as to endeavor to meet them, whether in relation to God, our country, or our fellow men.

SERMON XV.

MERE REPENTANCE NO GROUND OF PARDON.*

ACTS 3: 19. — *Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.*

WHETHER God will pardon our sins, is a most important question. And if he will pardon at all, the next question is, in what way and on what conditions will he do it? The scriptures assure us that on our repentance and faith he will pardon us for Christ's sake. But what is the doctrine of reason, or of the light of nature? If we may believe infidels, it is that we shall be pardoned *on our bare repentance*, without a mediator and without any atonement. This is a main principle of infidelity, on which the whole system, so far as it is allowed that we are sinners, depends. Therefore let us consider it attentively, and inquire whether it be indeed the voice of reason that we shall be pardoned on our repentance barely.

Several eminent infidels, as Hume and Bolingbroke, deny that there is any evidence of the moral perfections of God, or that he is a good being. On this principle there cannot possibly be evidence that he will pardon at all, either in consequence of repentance, or without it. For unless we have evidence of his goodness, it is impossible that we should know but that he will take pleasure in torturing his creatures, whether it answer any good purpose or not, or whether they deserve it or not. When infidels say that God will pardon on bare repentance, they must believe either that *justice* requires such pardon, or that mere *goodness* and *grace* require it; either that pardon is no more than strict justice requires, or that though it is indeed beyond the requirement of strict justice, it *is* required by divine goodness and grace. Let us consider the proposition on both these grounds.

I. *That the pardon of the penitent is a mere act of* JUSTICE, *and that if he be not pardoned, he suffers injustice.* Concerning this I observe,

1. If this be the case, *it is no pardon at all*, and it is absurd

* No date.

to call it by that name. To release a man on the footing of justice, is manifestly no pardon, but a mere act of justice which he deserves, and which cannot be denied him without injury and oppression. But pardon, in its very nature, is an act of grace, which may be denied without injustice. On this hypothesis, then, the law of nature must be, that we shall perform certain actions; and that if we do not, we shall repent, and thenceforth perform them. Now if this be the law of nature, then it is plain, that if we either perform the actions required, or having neglected them if we afterward repent and thenceforward perform them, we fulfil the law of nature, and stand right with respect to it, and therefore are to be justified by it. Our conduct, in either case, equally answers the law. Where then is the foundation or possibility of pardon in consequence of repentance? There is no possibility of it, as there is nothing to be pardoned.

2. On this supposition, repentance is either *the complete and perfect obedience* of the law, or it is *its complete penalty*. Otherwise it does not, and cannot answer the law or satisfy it, so but that the sinner is still, both by law and justice, liable to its penalty. Surely he is liable to the penalty of the law, who has indeed broken it, and who has not suffered the penalty. For as to a *gracious* pardon, whether with or without an atonement, it is in the present case, entirely out of the question; because the very principle on which we proceed, at present is, that the penitent is to be released from punishment on the footing of justice and not of grace. But repentance is neither the perfect obedience of the law, nor the complete penalty. It is not the perfect obedience of the law, as it is supposed that the subject has transgressed the law; and indeed, otherwise there would be no foundation or possibility of repentance. Nor is repentance the complete penalty of the law. That is a curse; but repentance is a blessing. The penalty of any law is an evil; but repentance is a good, and a most important and invaluable good. And to imagine that this is the curse or penalty of the law, is to confound good and evil, curses and blessings. If a man in consequence of transgressing the law of nature, be justly liable to repentance only, he is rather entitled to a reward than exposed to penalty, and so transgression will appear to be a moral good, rather than a moral evil.

3. This supposition implies that *the end* of all punishment *is the good of the transgressor*, and that he, in any case, deserves no more punishment than is subservient to his repentance and reformation. But this is by no means true in human governments; and whence does it become true in the divine? We never execute a murderer for his good, or to lead him to repentance and

to reform his morals. He is executed to restrain and deter others, to support the authority of the law, and to establish government. Yet the case may be so clear that no man shall question the justice of the execution. A child may deserve to be disinherited, and to be banished from his father's house, though there be no prospect, and therefore no intention of reforming him by the measure. The sole end may be, to deter the other children from the like vicious courses, and to cut off the abandoned child from the opportunity to corrupt them. In like manner, if a man have transgressed the law of God, and thereby have trampled on that law, and done what in him lies to bring it into general neglect and contempt, it is just that he should be exemplarily punished, to restrain and deter others. The public good requires it. It is due to the public, and therefore is just. But if his punishment be just, it cannot at the same time be unjust; as it would be, if agreeably to the principle now under consideration, he be entitled to impunity on the footing of justice.

4. This principle implies that there is in transgression no *evil* in any other respect than as by it the transgressor *has injured himself*. The principle is that the penitent cannot be punished consistently with justice, and that the only just end of punishment is the repentance and good of the transgressor. But if the only just end of punishment be the good of the transgressor, then the only just end of punishment is to remove or prevent evil to the transgressor. Therefore the whole and only evil of transgression, or that on the account of which it deserves punishment, is some ill consequence to the transgressor personally, and there is no evil in it in any other respect. Therefore there is no moral evil in any dishonor done to God, or in any abuse of any creature, unless therein the agent do an injury to himself; and no further, and on no other account than as he does an injury to himself. But who does not see the falsity of this doctrine? Who does not see that murder and theft are moral evils, whether by them the murderer and the thief injure or benefit themselves? Who does not see that another man's life and happiness, other things being equal, are at least of the same importance and worth as the life and happiness of a murderer, and that if it be a crime for a man to destroy his own happiness and life, it is also a crime to destroy those of another person?

5. On this principle, the punishment deserved for transgressing the law of nature *is no evil at all*, but a very valuable good. It is either repentance itself, or that wholesome discipline which is necessary to lead the subject to repentance. But neither of these is any evil, but a good, an advantage, a privilege. So that

on this principle, sin deserves no evil, but good; not a punishment, but a reward; for surely even that wholesome discipline which is absolutely necessary to a man's repentance and highest happiness, is as real a good, and may be as properly given in the way of reward, as an effectual medicine to a sick man. Such a medicine is no token of the displeasure of the physician towards his patient, but of his benevolence. So the necessary and wholesome discipline in question is no token of the displeasure of the Deity, but of his benevolence to the individual. It would be as absurd to punish vice with this, as it would be to punish murder by the administration of some dose, of disagreeable taste indeed, but which should certainly make the man who takes it, immortal and entirely prosperous and happy forever.

6. It *cannot be the law of nature* that sin deserves to be punished with repentance only, or with only that discipline which is necessary to the repentance and happiness of the subject. The law of nature is the law of reason, and the law of God. It is the effect of infinite reason and wisdom; and whatever is dictated by the law of nature, is the dictate of infinite reason and wisdom. Now it is not the dictate of reason that sin deserves nothing but repentance, or beneficial discipline; but it is the dictate of reason that it deserves some real and proper token of displeasure—something that on the whole shall be a real evil and disadvantage to the sinner.

7. There can be no law *without a sanction*, a punishment threatened. But neither repentance, nor wholesome discipline is a proper punishment, as it is on the whole no evil to the subject. Therefore on the principle we are now considering, there *is* no law of nature, and of course there is, without revelation, no moral government of God over intelligent creatures; which is contrary to the avowed doctrine of many deists, and to all which they say concerning the law of nature.

8. If the law of nature require, on the footing of justice, that every penitent be pardoned, then *it is a dispensation of grace*, and it ought to be called the *gospel* of nature instead of the *law* of nature. But what evidence have we that there is such a gospel of nature, and that God has given up, or will give up the law of nature to make way for this gospel? Besides, there is a direct contradiction in the supposition that a man is entitled to pardon, which is an act of grace, on the footing of strict justice.

9. On this hypothesis, sin, or transgression of the moral law of nature *is no moral evil*. Moral evil deserves natural evil—that natural evil which is an evil on the whole, and which is a token of the divine displeasure. But if transgression of the law of na-

ture deserve nothing but repentance, it deserves nothing which, on the whole, is any evil to the subject, and therefore is not a moral evil. Moral evil deserves to be disapproved and abhorred. This abhorrence is just; and therefore it is just in God, the supreme magistrate of the universe, to show this abhorrence in a corresponding treatment of the subject, and that, whether such manifestation tend to the repentance and good of the subject or not. And if this be just, it is deserved, and moral evil deserves something more than repentance. But sin or transgression, by the present supposition, deserves nothing more than repentance. Therefore, according to this supposition, it is not a moral evil.

If sin deserve hatred, and the proper fruits of hatred in no case but when such hatred and fruits are beneficial to the sinner, then sin is not in itself, and on account of its own nature and tendency hateful, but on account of this circumstance, that the hatred of it, and the proper fruits of that hatred are beneficial to the sinner, and in this circumstance alone the evil of sin consists, which is absurd. And if it be evil in no other respect, if it be not hateful on account of its own nature and tendency, it is no moral evil at all.

Moral evil is a damage to the intellectual system, as it violates the law, and weakens the government of the system; and unless restrained and counteracted, it would issue in the ruin of the system. Therefore the good of the system requires that it be restrained and counteracted by the great moral governor, to whom it belongs to defend the rights and secure the interests of the system. But what restraint of a moral kind, and in the way of moral government, can be laid upon moral evil, otherwise than by law, threatening, and punishment? And if the good of the intellectual system require such restraint to be laid on sin, then the punishment of the sinner, which must be more than repentance, is just and sin is a moral evil.

Moral evil is a damage to the universe, as it is a violation of the law, an opposition to the authority and government of the God of nature, and as it dissolves and weakens that government. Therefore satisfaction is due to that authority and government, and the good of the system requires that by something done to support the government, to restore its tone, and to deter others from future transgressions, reparation be made of the injury done by moral evil. But bare repentance is no satisfaction to the insulted and weakened law, authority, and government of the universe—is no reparation of the damage done to the public, which consists in weakening the government; and the threatening of repentance is no proper terror or restraint to others. What ter-

ror will it be to the man disposed to commit theft, adultery, murder or treason, to assure him that if he do so, he shall become the subject of repentance, which is on the whole no evil, but an inestimable good, absolutely necessary to his complete and everlasting happiness, and infallibly connected with it? It would be no more terrible, and no more have a tendency to restrain the individual from the crimes to which he might be disposed, and would no more support government, or give satisfaction for a crime already committed, than the declaration that whoever shall commit either of the crimes just mentioned, shall go through a laborious and painful exertion, to be followed with health, honor, and complete happiness. No more would the threatening of repentance be a proper terror and restraint to those who are disposed to put off repentance and reconciliation with God in the way of the gospel. If a man, pretending to deliver an authoritative threatening, should tell a procrastinating sinner that if he do not now repent, he will repent hereafter; that if he do not now become reconciled to God, he will hereafter become reconciled, and thenceforth forever be happy in him, and that thus he shall be purified for his present procrastination, he would act an absurd and contemptible, not to say a ridiculous part. Now whatever sin deserves, the general good of the moral system requires, and no more. Therefore if sin deserve no more by way of punishment than repentance, which is no satisfaction for the crime of moral evil, no support of the divine government, no proper terror or restraint of others from future transgressions, and therefore no reparation of damage done to the system, then the good of the moral system requires so such reparation. And if it require no such reparation, it must be for the reason that it hath not been impaired; and if it have not been impaired, no moral evil has been committed. Therefore sin is no moral evil.

If it be not just to inflict on the sinner any punishment besides repentance, or to exact anything else of him, then he owes nothing else, whether to the universe or to the supreme magistracy of it. Of course the public good requires nothing else of him, by way of reparation of damage, support of government, or of restoring the tone of government. And if the public good require nothing of this kind, then no damage has been done, the government has not been weakened, and the tone of it has not been relaxed. Of course sin is no moral evil.

If it be not just to punish the penitent, then he deserves it not; and he does not owe it to the public, or the public good does not require his punishment; it only requires that he should repent. Therefore either all his past transgressions of the law of nature

are no damage to the public, or his repentance makes full satisfaction for them. But repentance does not make full satisfaction, as is plain in cases of murder, treason, etc. Of course, on the present supposition, his past transgressions are no damage to the public, or in other words are no moral evil. And if they be no moral evil, neither will any future transgressions be so. A repetition of nothing is still nothing.

If the man who repents do not deserve punishment, he no more deserved it before he repented, unless it be that his repentance make full satisfaction for his sin, and by restoring the tone of the divine law and government, and exhibiting a proper motive to deter others from transgression and repair the damage done to the system. But this is not the fact, as appears by the reasons already given. And if the sinner never deserve punishment, whether before or after repentance, he has committed no evil.

Perhaps it may be objected to some of the foregoing reasoning that God's government needs no support, as it is impossible to overthrow, or even to weaken it, and that the public good of God's kingdom cannot possibly be impaired. If this objection mean that God's government is irresistible, and uncontrollable, this is undoubtedly true. But this is not all that is requisite in the divine government. A human government in the hands of an absolute tyrant may be irresistible; and yet it may be unstable, capricious, relaxed and contemptible. Its laws may not be executed, and disobedience may at least in many instances be practised without restraint. Nor will mere power, however irresistible, be sufficient to prevent these effects. Nor can this government be maintained with honor and dignity but by a steady execution of the laws, or proper satisfaction for crimes. And just so as to the divine government. As to the part of the objection which asserts that the good of God's kingdom cannot be impaired, it may be observed, that it is not true in any other sense, than that the laws of this kingdom cannot fail to be steadily executed, or supported with dignity. As the wisdom, holiness, and goodness of God make it certain that he will steadily execute or support his own good and perfect law, so it is certain that the good of his kingdom cannot be impaired. Otherwise we could not be certain that it might not be. But,

II. *Let us consider the other supposition, that the penitent does not indeed on the footing of justice deserve impunity, yet that by* FREE GRACE *he may obtain it, and that the divine perfections require that he should.*

If the exemption of the penitent from punishment be an act of

free grace, still divine goodness will not admit of it unless it be required by the general good of the moral system. Now real and extensive goodness, such as the goodness of God, is always governed by the general good, and seeks what is required by that and that only. It would be no goodness, but the very opposite of goodness, to seek an object which however it might promote the happiness of the individual, or of the few, does on the whole, and with respect to the entire system, obstruct or diminish good and happiness. So that the divine goodness does not require the pardon of the sinner on his repentance merely, unless the general good of the moral system require it. Now if the general good require it, it either requires it even without repentance, or it requires it as a consequence of repentance only. If it require pardon in the former case, then the general good requires no satisfaction, or reparation of damage—nothing to restrain or deter others from the like transgression; if this be the fact, it must be because no damage to the public good has been done by sin, and therefore sin is no moral evil.

If on the other hand it be said that the general good requires that pardon be dispensed in consequence of repentance only, still as repentance is no proper punishment of sin, no satisfaction for it, nothing adequate to the ends of deterring and restraining others from its commission, or of supporting the authority of the divine law, and the tone of the divine government, and therefore does not repair the damage done to the moral system by moral evil, it of course follows, that there was no damage done by sin to the system, and therefore that sin is no moral evil.

If the law of nature which is founded on the public good, and always requires what that requires, do not require the punishment of the sinner, or anything to repair the violation of the law of nature, it must be because it has not been violated, that is has not been transgressed, which is contrary to the supposition; for what is sin but the transgression of the divine law, which, where there is no revelation, is the law of nature?

If the penitent deserve punishment, as is now supposed, then the law of nature requires it. As he is supposed to be without revelation, and to sin against no law beside the law of nature, of course he deserves nothing but what the law of nature requires. But it is granted that he deserves punishment. Therefore the law of nature requires it, and of course cannot require that he be dismissed with impunity. Doubtless the law of nature may be executed, in some instances at least, consistently with the general good. It would be absurd to suppose the contrary. The law of nature is founded on the general good. Whatever the general

good requires, reason requires in every instance; and whatever reason requires, the law of nature requires. Therefore if the law of nature require the punishment of the penitent, as it certainly does if by that law he deserves punishment, the general good, and the divine goodness require the same.

It is, in the present state of the argument granted, that by justice and the law of nature the transgressor, even though penitent, deserves punishment. But the law of nature is the law of reason; and the law of reason is the law of the general good of the moral system—the law which is entirely regulated by the general good, and which requires what that requires, and forbids and threatens only what that forbids and threatens. Therefore if the law of justice and of nature threaten and require the punishment of the transgressor, even though he repent, as it is now granted that it does, the general good of the moral system requires the same. Therefore it cannot require at the same time his pardon. And if the general good do not require this, neither does the goodness of God require it. If the sinner though penitent deserve punishment he deserves it by the law of nature. But the law of nature is the law of right, and is the rule of right. That he should be punished therefore is right, all things considered. But the divine goodness never forbids, but absolutely requires what is right all things considered. Therefore the divine goodness requires his punishment.

To allow that it would be consistent with justice to punish the penitent, and yet to say that divine goodness does not admit of his punishment, is to hold a direct contradiction. If his punishment be just and deserved, the general good allows and requires it, as the general good is the measure of justice when no atonement is made. And what the general good requires, divine goodness requires, and what the general good forbids, the divine goodness forbids. And as it is allowed in the case now put that the punishment of the penitent would be just, it is allowed that the general good, and of course the divine goodness admits of it. Therefore to hold this, and at the same time to hold that the divine goodness does not admit of it, is to hold a contradiction.

Such is our reasoning. If it be just, several inferences follow.

1. *That there is no evidence from reason, that the penitent will, on the bare ground of his repentance, escape punishment*, but abundant evidence to the contrary. This fundamental doctrine of infidelity is so far from having any foundation in reason, the law of nature, or the divine goodness, that it directly contradicts them all, and is irreconcilable with them. Therefore let infidels no more plead any of these in support of this favorite and

fundamental principle of their system. Let them allow that they hold this system, not because it can be supported by reason, by the law of nature, or the divine goodness, but because they derive much ease and comfort from it, as it quiets their fearful apprehensions of future punishment, and therefore they *will* hold it, however contradictory it be to reason, to the law of nature, and to the goodness of God.

2. Hence it also follows that *there is no advantage in infidelity in that very respect in which its advocates flatter themselves there is the greatest advantage.* The boasted advantage of infidelity is, that it frees a man from those fearful apprehensions and gloomy feelings which are excited by the doctrine of future punishment as taught in the gospel. But if bare repentance secure not to its subject impunity, all this supposed advantage of infidelity fails; and the infidel knows not but that he may be in the same awful state in which the gospel declares that all those shall be who are not interested in the atonement; and he has abundant reason for all those gloomy feelings and fearful apprehensions, which, as he pretends, are naturally excited by the gospel, so that to become an infidel on this ground is to act with folly. And still more is it the part of folly to embrace infidelity, if, as appears from the preceding reasoning, the divine goodness not only does not secure impunity to the penitent without an atonement, but forbids it as utterly inconsistent with the good of God's kingdom, or of the great system of being.

3. We may also infer, from what has been said, *the necessity of an atonement for sin.* If there be no foundation to expect the forgiveness of sin on bare repentance, the necessity of an atonement in order to its forgiveness follows of course.

4. Therefore since an atonement is necessary, and since one which is all-sufficient is provided and offered in the gospel, let us joyfully and thankfully receive it, and make that the only foundation of our hope. It is an all-sufficient and glorious foundation. The author of it is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, equal with the father, and one with him. In him we may safely trust. He will never leave, nor forsake us. Nor can we with the least safety depend on any other. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Build here, and you are safe forever!

SERMON XVI.

CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

1 Cor. 1: 30.—*Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us,—righteousness.*

Every truth ought to be made the object of our attention in proportion to its importance. And though *all* the doctrines of the gospel are important, yet some are more so than others. The doctrines of the present fallen state of mankind; of the possibility and mode of salvation by Christ; of the necessity of union to him, and of justification through him: these are among the most important truths implied in the words of our text. Particularly it is there implied, 1. That all real christians are in Christ: "of him are ye in Christ Jesus;" that is, ye Corinthian converts, and doubtless all other real converts to the christian faith; and 2. That in and through Christ all real believers obtain righteousness or justification: "Who of God is made unto us, righteousness." As the doctrines of the union of believers to Christ, and of justification through him have, in every age of the church, been accounted doctrines of great importance, so they are peculiarly important and necessary to be thoroughly understood at the present day, when they have been perverted to the support of several dangerous tenets which are totally subversive of christianity itself. It may be useful therefore, in view of our text, to inquire,

1. In what sense believers are in Christ, or are united to him; and 2. In what sense he is made righteousness unto them, or they are justified through him.

I. *In what sense are believers in Christ, or united to him?*

"Of him are ye in Christ Jesus." These words doubtless point out a peculiar relation between Christ and believers; a relation which is often mentioned in the New Testament. John 15: 5, "I am the vine; ye are the branches. He that abideth *in me* and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not *in me*, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." John 17: 21, "That

* Preached before the General Association of Connecticut, June 19, 1786.

they all may be one, as thou father art in me, and I in thee; that they may be one *in us*." Eph. 1: 6, "He hath made us accepted *in* the beloved;" and chap. 5: 30, "For we are members of his body; of his flesh and of his bones." 1 Cor. 12: 27, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," etc. The same relation is illustrated by that which subsists between the husband and wife; and the whole body of believers is called "the bride, the lamb's wife." But what is this union between Christ and believers? In what respect are they one? To these inquiries I reply, there is a two-fold union between Christ and believers; a vital union and a relative union; or what may more properly be called a union of affection and a union of relation; or a union which is real and a union which is constituted. Each of these requires a distinct explanation.

1. By a *vital* union, or the union of *affection* is meant, that cordial and mutual love or affection which subsists between Christ and all true believers. This love is implied in the true and saving faith of the gospel. Every real christian being the subject of this faith, is therein united in heart and affection to Christ. The first act of this faith is the uniting act; and in its exercise the believer cordially receives Christ; is sincerely pleased with him; loves those things which Christ loves; desires and seeks those objects which he seeks, and in affection becomes one with him. He has the very spirit of Christ. "The same mind is in him which was also in Christ Jesus." He is also united to him in the exercise of trust and reliance on him. He leans on Christ his beloved, and lives by communications of grace from him. "His life is hid with Christ in God;" and "the life which he now lives in the flesh, he lives by faith on the Son of God." This is the vital or real union; the union of affection between Christ and believers. Faith has by some been called the hand or instrument by which believers lay hold on and receive Christ. But with more propriety may it be called the act of unition itself, or the uniting act, by which Christ and the believer become one. We are also to inquire,

2. What is meant by the *relative* and *constituted* union between Christ and believers. This has been variously explained, and in some instances so as to give erroneous impressions. Some have said that the believer, in consequence of faith is *viewed* or *considered* by God as one with Christ, and is treated accordingly; is pardoned, justified and received to glory, because he is one with Christ. If the meaning of this be that the believer is viewed as one with Christ in affection, and as cordially united to him in faith and love, and therefore is pardoned and accepted,

this is undoubtedly true; but it contains very little if any important meaning. It amounts only to this, that the believer being viewed by God as united to Christ in affection, or in faith and love, or what is the same thing being viewed as a believer, is pardoned, etc. Doubtless God pardons none but believers; and he pardons them viewing them as being what they are, that is real believers, and under no other conception. But it is manifest that in the expression just mentioned, something further than this is intended by those who use it. The expression is that the believer, in consequence of faith, is viewed or considered by God as one with Christ, and is treated accordingly. Yet in what other sense are Christ and the believer one, than that they are one in affection? None will pretend that they are really one person; that the believer by faith becomes Christ, and Christ the believer. How then can it be true that God views and considers them as one? Does God view or consider them as one when in reality they are not? No! for this is impossible. That he treats and acts toward them in certain respects, *as if* they were one, is granted. He in certain respects treats believers in justification, as if they had themselves wrought out the perfect satisfaction of Christ. He as completely acquits and justifies them, as completely exempts them from the curse of the law, and admits them to the happiness of heaven, as he would have done if they had wrought out the perfect righteousness of Christ. Yet in reality the believer is not Christ; nor did he work out that satisfaction to divine justice which Christ effected; nor has he any righteousness of his own which answers the demand of the law.

Some have said concerning this relative union between Christ and the believer, that they are *one in law*. But what is intended by this expression? The most obvious meaning of it is, that what the law demands of one it demands of the other, and what it does not demand of the one it does not demand of the other. If this be the real meaning of those who say that Christ and the believer are *one in law*, then, if they are correct, the consequence is, that as the law has now no demand on Christ, so it has none on the believer; and that as Christ is justified and accepted by the father on the footing of strict law, so is the believer. But this is utterly contrary to the whole doctrine of the New Testament, which asserts peremptorily "that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified" in the sight of God. But perhaps some may say that by the proposition, "that Christ and the believer are *one in law*," is meant, not that they are one in the eye of the moral law, but in the eye of the gospel, or the new law of grace, as they are pleased to call it. But this also needs expla-

nation. For surely the meaning cannot be that the gospel does not consider the believer as a sinner deserving the curse of the law, and capable of being exempted from that curse only by a free and gracious pardon. Yet the gospel by no means considers Christ in this light. It by no means supposes that Christ is exempted from punishment by mere free grace and pardon. So that it still appears that the gospel does not consider or suppose that the believer and Christ are strictly one.

It seems to be supposed by many who dwell on this subject, that there is a threefold union between Christ and the believer; that first the individual becomes a believer, or exercises faith, and thus becomes one with Christ in affection; that immediately on this, by the divine constitution, commences a *relative* union, or God appoints that Christ and the believer *be one;* and in the last place, that he proceeds to *treat* them as one. But this middle kind of union I conceive to be a mere imagination. God does not ordain that the believer in consequence of faith, shall be one with Christ, and then proceed to treat him as one with him; but in consequence of faith, though he sees and knows the believer to be a person as entirely distinct from Christ as from God the father or from the Holy Spirit, yet he proceeds to treat him and conduct towards him in certain respects *as if* he were one with Christ; I mean in these respects, in exempting him from condemnation; in justifying him; in receiving him to the divine favor, and admitting him in due time to eternal glory. Therefore the constituted union of Christ and the believer consists, not in God's *view* or *opinion* or *judgment* that they are one person, or in his determination or constitution that they shall be one; but wholly in his treating the believer in certain respects as if he were one with Christ, and were possessed in his own person of Christ's merits; which treatment is indeed founded on the divine constitution or determination. Nor is there any intermediate oneness between the oneness of *affection* and the oneness of *treatment*. Now this idea of the relative oneness between Christ and the believer entirely coincides with the representations of scripture. According to these representations Christ is the bridegroom, the husband; and the church, which is the whole body of believers, is the bride, the lamb's wife. Now no one ever imagines that the husband and wife among men are one and the same being and person; yet we often treat them as if they were the same. We treat the wife with the same honor as we do the husband, and that for his sake, or on his account. And when it is said that they are one *in law*, or that the law considers them as one, all that is meant is, that in certain legal respects and proceedings

they are *treated* as if they were one, and as if what is done by one of them, were done by the other or by both. At the same time, the judge and other officers of the law never think or imagine that they are really one and the same person.

Again, Christ calls himself the friend of his disciples. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends." Now between friends there is a real and sincere oneness of affection, and it is sometimes said that we consider one of two friends as being the other, or as being the same as the other. But such expressions never mean that it is our real opinion that one is the other; but merely that we *treat* one with the same respect and kindness as we should the other if he were present. The expression wholly refers to the identity of treatment, and not to any belief on our part that the two are in fact one—that there is a real identity. But I am to inquire,

II. *In what sense Christ is made righteousness to believers, or in what sense they are justified through him.*

Here I purpose, 1. To inquire into the meaning of the term justification; 2. To show in what sense we are not justified by our own good works; and 3. In what sense we are justified through Christ.

1. What is *the meaning* of the term justification, as it is used in the New Testament? It is a matter of importance that we affix right ideas to this term; for I doubt not that the very term itself, from its common acceptation, may have given occasion to erroneous sentiments as to this important doctrine. It is said that justification is a forensic term, originally and primarily used in civil courts; and this is undoubtedly true. A man is said to be justified in a civil court, when in consequence of a fair trial it appears that he is innocent, or that he has not broken the law by which he has been tried. In this case he is declared to be innocent, or is justified and acquitted on the footing of *justice* and *merit*, not of *grace;* nor has the judge any right to condemn him. On the contrary the individual has a *right*, on the ground of personal innocence, to demand acquittal or justification; and to condemn him would be gross injury and oppression. This is justification in the civil courts, and in the original and most strict sense of the word.

But the same word is used in a very different sense in the gospel; if it were not, it would be wholly inconsistent with that gospel, and with the grace of it. The justification of the civil courts is an act of pure *law* and justice; but the justification of the gospel is an act of pure *grace* or favor. Rom. 3: 24, "Being

justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." The justification of the civil courts includes no *pardon* at all; but pardon is an *essential* part of the justification of the gospel. To justify a man who upon trial is found to be guilty, and justly to deserve punishment for certain high crimes which he has actually committed, would be, in the estimation and language of our civil courts, an absolute absurdity. But in the estimation and language of the gospel it is no absurdity at all. Therefore we must always carefully distinguish between the sense of the words "justify" and "justification" in the common language of mankind and with regard to the violations of human laws, and the sense of the same words as used in the gospel and with regard to the violations of the laws of God.

Again, in civil courts justification is the act of a *judge*, proceeding according to law; but the justification of the gospel is the act of a *sovereign*, proceeding beside and above law, and yet in such a manner as most effectually to support and establish the authority of the law. Doubtless it is the part of a judge to proceed strictly by the law as his rule; nor has he any right in his judicial capacity to vary at all from the law. But just as clearly is it the peculiar province of a sovereign to pardon, and to "have mercy on whom he will have mercy." So that though it has been said by divines of eminence, that the justification of the gospel is the act of a judge proceeding according to law, it is plainly a mistake, and such a mistake as is plainly subversive of the grace of the gospel. For if any man be justified by his divine judge proceeding according to law, then plainly he is justified by the deeds of the law, and not by the grace of the gospel. It is true, indeed, that, in the general judgment, Christ the judge will justify all believers; yet in justifying them he will proceed not strictly according to law, but according to the promise of the free and sovereign grace of the gospel. We shall all be tried by our final judge; but we shall be tried by two different rules or constitutions. Those who shall have laid hold on the grace and promises of the gospel, will be mercifully acquitted according to that grace and those promises. Those who shall not have laid hold on that grace, still standing on the footing of the law, will be judged strictly by the law.

Some have said that justification is a sentence pronouncing a man to be *perfectly righteous*, or *to stand perfectly right with respect to the law*; and that this sentence is according to strict truth, as every believer *does* stand perfectly right with regard to the divine law. But if the meaning of these propositions be, that the believer *in his own person* is perfectly righteous, or stands

perfectly right with regard to the divine law, that doctrine, if correct, would entirely supersede the necessity of Christ's satisfaction, and overthrow the whole gospel. Surely he who in his own person stands right with respect to the law, or is perfectly righteous, has no need of satisfaction to be made for his sins by another. Or if the meaning of these propositions be, that the believer is righteous with Christ's righteousness, or that he stands right with respect to the divine law by reason of Christ's satisfaction, then they amount merely to this, that Christ has satisfied the law on his behalf, and that he for Christ's sake, is justified and saved. But this can never warrant the expression, that the believer stands perfectly right with respect to the law, when the law entirely condemns him; or that he is perfectly righteous, when in himself he is poor and miserable and guilty.

In opposition to all this it may be urged, that it is true the believer has no righteousness of his own, distinct from that of Christ, to meet the demands of the law, but that still Christ's righteousness is his righteousness, and that Christ and he are one; that all personal identity depends on the divine constitution, and that by the divine constitution, Christ and the believer are one person. But in answer to this I need not say anything, as it wholly depends on the nature of that oneness which subsists between Christ and the believer, and which I have already endeavored to illustrate. I shall only observe, that it is granted that personal identity depends on the divine constitution. But it is not granted that there is any divine constitution making Christ and the believer one and the same person. It is only admitted that the constituted oneness between Christ and the believer, is a oneness or similarity of divine treatment, and not a oneness of person.

On the whole, the true idea of the justification which is mentioned so often in the New Testament is, that the believer for Christ's sake, for the sake of his satisfaction, and in reward of his perfect obedience, is pardoned, acquitted from condemnation, and entitled by promise to heaven and all its glory; and thus is treated as if he himself had satisfied the law, and as completely obeyed it as Christ has. Thus though the believer is treated as if he were perfectly righteous, yet he is not supposed or considered or pronounced to *be* righteous. He is indeed pronounced to be free from condemnation and wrath, and to be an heir of heaven; but this is wholly for Christ's sake, and not at all on account of his own righteousness or his own merits of any kind whatever. This leads us to the next particular under this head, which is,

2. To show in what sense we are *not justified by our own good works*. As to this I would observe,

(1) That when it is said we are not justified by our own good works, the meaning is not that good works, and those wrought by ourselves too, are not necessary to our justification. In order to justification we must be regenerated, and become the subjects of a cordial faith and trust in Christ. But such a faith in Christ, is itself a moral or spiritual exercise of heart, and therefore is a good work. Besides, faith implies love to Christ, which is undoubtedly a good work. And love to Christ plainly implies love to the whole Deity. And love or reconciliation of heart to God, will necessarily induce repentance for sin, and a disposition to general obedience. But all these are moral affections or good works. And we can no more be justified without them, than we can be without faith. And where one grace exists, all the other graces do radically exist; and it is not to be imagined that faith can exist in the heart without them. But that these graces, or good works are requisite to justification, the whole language of Scripture implies. "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord that he may have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon." "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." From these passages it is evident that faith, repentance and love to God are essential prerequisites to our justification; and of course we are not justified *without* good works, but *on occasion of them*; so that if we have them, we are infallibly justified, and if we have them not, we are not, nor can we be justified.

(2) Again, when it is said that we are not justified by our good works, it is not meant but that God is well pleased with the good works of believers at the time of their justification, and even antecedent to it in the order of nature. All virtue, obedience, or holiness is pleasing to God in whomsoever it exists, whether it be in angels, in Adam as he was in paradise, or in believers. The good works of believers, consisting in faith, love, repentance, etc., at the time of their justification, have a real moral beauty and excellence in them. The same may be said of every, the least good work, and of the very first act of faith, or love, or any other grace. God sees it to be suitable that we should, in order to our justification, repent, and be reconciled to himself, and believe on his Son. And when we do all this, he is pleased with it as with that which in itself is suitable and right. And being well pleased with these good works, he justifies him who is the

subject of them; not on account of the merit of these good works, or on account of any satisfaction thereby made for the individual's sins, (for there is not the least degree of merit, satisfaction or atonement attaching to them,) but because in themselves they are right, and he has required them of all. But though God is well pleased with these good works in the believer at the time of his justification, yet he is by no means well pleased with his character taken together, nor is he at all reconciled to it as it is in itself. Its sin and demerit still infinitely overbalance its righteousness or moral excellence. On the whole, therefore, even the believer in himself considered, and without respect to the satisfaction of Christ, must be infinitely abominable in the sight of God.

This being a matter of importance, I would illustrate it by an example. A subject of a most just, wise, and excellent prince, without the least provocation, but from mere ambition or malice against his prince, excites a rebellion, collects an army, and spreads confusion and blood throughout the kingdom. Thousands of innocent persons lose their lives, and thousands more are reduced to extreme poverty and distress. At length the leader of the rebellion is taken and imprisoned. His trial and execution being deferred for some time, he has opportunity for reflection. By reflection he is brought to real repentance and cordial reconciliation to his sovereign. He now sees and most explicitly owns that his whole conduct in the rebellion arose from the most wicked and abominable principles in himself; that the character of his sovereign is not only irreproachable but most excellent, and worthy of the entire esteem and gratitude of his subjects in general and of himself in particular; and that therefore his rebellion, in every step of it, was altogether unjustifiable, and that he on account of it justly deserves all that the law denounces against him. By these and other confessions, and by the whole of his conduct and conversation, he manifests his sincere repentance and reconciliation to his sovereign. Now these his repentance and reconciliation, taken by themselves, will doubtless be agreeable to his sovereign. They are reasonable in themselves, and the indispensable duty of the man, and therefore the sovereign observes them with pleasure. Yet taking the whole conduct of the man together, the sovereign is by no means pleased with it, but views it with utter abhorrence. And as the individual justly deserves for his various and aggravated crimes a painful and ignominious death, so his sovereign may find it necessary for the public good to leave him in the hands of justice, unless some proper atonement should be made. In like manner, though God views with

complacency the faith, love and repentance of the believer, and that in two respects, first as in themselves agreeable to him, and then because they imply a friendly disposition to Christ, and because in them the believer is united in heart to him, so that God is pleased with him as the friend of his well beloved Son, yet without a respect to the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, God is by no means pleased with his character in general, and can by no means be reconciled to him, or pardon and justify him.

(3) Again, when it is said that we are not justified by our own good works, I do not conceive it to be meant that justification cannot *in any sense* be considered as the *reward* of the faith, repentance and love of the believer. By reward I mean any token of approbation. It is allowed on all hands, that heaven and all its joys and glory are conferred on the believer as a reward of his faith and good works; and that in the bestowment of the *degree* of these blessings, he will be rewarded according to his works. Yet this reward is not bestowed on account of his good works solely or chiefly; nor would it be bestowed at all were it not for the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ. These are the procuring and meritorious cause of that reward, without which it would not be obtained by any one who has sinned, though his faith and holiness were ever so sincere and entire. Nor is there any inconsistency between these two propositions, that heaven is bestowed on the believer on account of Christ's merit solely as the procuring cause, and that it is bestowed in the way of a reward of his own faith and good works.

If heaven be bestowed as a reward of the believer's faith and good works in general, why is it not to be considered as a reward of the *first* acts of his faith and good works, as truly as of any subsequent acts? Those first acts are as real acts of virtue and holiness, and as really excellent in the moral sense, as any that follow. Therefore they are as properly rewardable. Heaven is not bestowed from a regard to any or all the holy acts of the believer as the meritorious or procuring cause; and would in fact not be bestowed as a reward to any or all of them, were it not for the merit of Christ. And this merit being the procuring and meritorious cause of the reward, God may take occasion to bestow that reward on the very first acts of faith and holiness in the believer, as well as those that follow afterwards; and it no more implies justification by works that heaven is bestowed as a reward of those acts of faith and holiness which are first in the believer, than that it is bestowed as a reward of those which follow. To suppose indeed that it is merited, or is bestowed as a reward to the believer from a regard to his faith and good works as the pro-

curing cause, would be utterly inconsistent with the gospel doctrine of Christ's merit or satisfaction; and this is equally true, whether it be bestowed in this manner as a reward of the first acts of faith and holiness, or of any which follow. But if it be bestowed from a primary regard to the merit of Christ, and would not be bestowed but from a regard to this as the procuring cause, and if in bestowing it from regard to this primary, procuring cause God also takes occasion to manifest his approbation in a reward to the faith and holiness of the believer, still there is nothing in all this which is at all inconsistent with the gospel doctrine concerning the necessity and effect of Christ's satisfaction and vicarious righteousness. And this is equally true whether the faith or holiness which is rewarded be that of which the believer is subject in the first instance, or that of which he is the subject at some subsequent time. In either case it is true that the vicarious satisfaction of Christ is absolutely necessary to the attainment of heaven and other spiritual blessings, and is the sole primary and procuring or meritorious cause of them. Yet in bestowing heaven from regard to this as the meritorious cause, God takes occasion to reward the whole faith and holiness of the real believer.

Now if even heaven and all its glory be given in the way of reward to the faith and holiness of the believer, and in the way of reward to the first acts of faith and holiness as well as of any other, then why may not *justification* be bestowed in the same way, and with the same view? Justification is not a greater blessing than heaven and all its glory. And as the only meritorious cause of the bestowment of heaven, is the satisfaction of Christ, so it is also of justification. And as the faith and good works of the believer do not at all come in in aid of the merit of Christ, to operate in any measure as the procuring cause of the glory of heaven to the believer, just so it is as to justification. The faith and good works of the believer are neither in whole nor in part the meritorious cause of justification. Yet justification may be granted in the way of reward to his faith and good works.

On the whole, though I conceive it is not essential to the doctrine of the New Testament, (which teaches that we are justified through Christ alone and not by our own works) to hold, either that at the time of our justification we are destitute of all good works, or that at that time God is not at all well pleased with the good works of the believer and does not in justification manifest any approbation of them, or that justification is no reward of the faith and good works of the believer; yet it is essential to that doctrine that the believer is not justified *by* his good works, or in

consideration of them as the *meritorious cause*, or as making any atonement or satisfaction or compensation, in whole or in part, for his past disobedience, or as at all answering the demands of the law and supporting its authority. Whoever *thus* holds that the believer's good works do not make satisfaction for his sins, cannot be said to hold that we are justified by our good works, or "by the deeds of the law," in the sense in which the apostle denies it. We come now,

3. To inquire in what sense *we are justified through Christ*. To this inquiry I answer, that we are justified through Christ, as we are justified on account of his merit alone, or solely on account of his satisfaction and obedience as the meritorious cause. But having repeatedly mentioned this matter in speaking on the preceding particulars, I shall not dwell on it at present. I shall only notice a part of the scriptural evidence of this great and fundamental truth that we are indeed justified solely through the merits of Christ. The expression *merits of Christ* is not indeed to be found in the scriptures; and yet what is intended by the expression is found there abundantly. Thus Rev. 5: 9, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Rom. 3: 24, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Rom. 5: 18, 19, "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." And in the same chapter, ver. 9, "Much more, then, being now *justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Eph. 4: 32, "Even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." And as the authority of this last text, with respect to the present question, has by some been disputed, it being said that according to the original it is, "Even as God *in* Christ hath forgiven you," I shall add 1 John 2: 12, which admits of no evasion. The words are, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you *for his name's sake*," *διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, on account of his name*. By these and such like passages of scripture, we are taught that the merits of Christ are the only procuring cause of justification. These merits comprehend his sufferings unto death, and his perfect righteousness. By the former he made satisfaction to the law for sin; by the latter he has exhibited to us an example; has laid a foundation for his own intercession and for the bestowment of justification and eternal life on his disciples, and of all the

honors of his exalted state on himself, in the way of reward to his tried, persevering, and inviolate obedience.

Having thus finished what was at first proposed from the text, we may now briefly notice some inferences and reflections. And,

1. Hence we may learn *the true idea of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the believer.* It consists not in supposing or thinking that the righteousness of Christ is the believer's righteousness, but in the fact that the believer is treated *as if* it were his. Or if any choose to express themselves thus, "That the righteousness of Christ becomes by imputation the believer's righteousness as to the effects of it," this is no more than that the effects of Christ's righteousness are the same to the believer as if it were his own righteousness; and this comes again to what was just said, that the believer is treated *as if* the righteousness of Christ were his own.

2. Hence also we may understand what is meant *by the imputation of the sins of the elect to Christ.* It consists not in thinking or supposing Christ to be a sinner, but wholly in treating him as if he were a sinner; as if he were guilty of all the sins of the elect, and in punishing him, or putting him to suffering and shame accordingly. In this sense "he bare their sins in his own body on the tree," and "on him were laid the iniquities of us all." In this explanation of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the elect and of their sins to him, we avoid various difficulties, and at best seeming absurdities, which are otherwise inevitable; such for example as that there should be a transfer of guilt or merit from one person to another, or that one person should become another, or that God should so be deceived and imposed upon, as to think and judge of persons contrary to the truth.

3. This subject also teaches us in what sense *the sin of Adam is imputed to all his posterity.* The idea of imputation in this case has been more reprobated than in either of those just mentioned. That Adam's sin should be ours, and that we on account of it should be judged and condemned as sinners, or that we should be the same person as Adam, or that God should so consider or suppose us, has appeared to many to be absurd, impious and impossible. But if we conceive that our standing or falling was suspended on the standing or falling of Adam; that Adam having fallen, God permitted us all to fall also; and that he so ordered things that we are liable to the numberless calamities of life, and thus are treated as if we were sinners; on such a representation, no man, I conceive, can fasten an absurdity. Undoubtedly God who had a right to suffer Adam to fall and become a

sinner, had the same right to have suffered all mankind to become sinners by their own personal acts, without any reference to the sin of Adam. And if so, what can be said to show that he had no right to permit them to fall in consequence of the fall of Adam? If he had a right to permit them to fall though Adam had not fallen, surely the fall of Adam did not deprive him of that right. But the right remaining, he might exercise it, if he saw fit, on occasion and in consequence of Adam's sin, as well as on any other occasion. To determine these things was the part of divine, sovereign wisdom only; so that whatever *that* should determine and establish, would be perfectly right.

I before observed with regard to the justification of the sinner, that it is not the act of a judge proceeding according to law; but of a sovereign proceeding on the plan of free grace. Just so, I apprehend, we are to conceive of the divine constitution by which all mankind come into the world in a depraved state, that it was not the constitution or act of a judge condemning and punishing them for the guilt of Adam's sin; but of a wise sovereign, permitting in consequence of Adam's sin, all his posterity to fall into the same state of condemnation, and at the same time ordering them to be born into a world full of calamities, and with bodies that should ever be liable to pain, disease and death. And as in the justification and salvation of the believer, God shows his perfect well-pleasedness with the satisfaction and obedience of Christ, so in the dispensation of providence by which the posterity of Adam are born into the world in a fallen and calamitous state, God manifests his abhorrence of the sin of our common father. Again, as in the justification and salvation of the believer, God treats him in certain respects as if he were one with Christ, and were personally possessed of his merits; so in the dispensation of providence by which all men are born in a fallen, depraved and calamitous state, God treats them as though they had personally committed Adam's sin; for the consequences of that sin in this life are the same with respect to all Adam's posterity as to himself. One consequence of Adam's sin to himself was that he became habitually depraved; and the same is the consequence to all his posterity. Another consequence to him was that he became frail in body, and liable to pain, disease, casualty and death; and the same is the consequence to all his posterity. Another consequence to him was that the very earth was cursed for his sake, so that it was only in the sweat of his brow that he could eat bread; and here again the same is true of his posterity. In these respects, therefore, the posterity of Adam, on account of his sin, are treated as sinners. And in this treatment Adam's

sin is imputed to them, and in the treatment itself consists the imputation.

4. Hence we may also learn in what sense *faith is accounted or imputed for righteousness* to the believer. The imputation of faith for righteousness, as was said concerning the imputation of Christ's righteousness, consists wholly in *treatment*, not in opinion or judgment. It consists in treating the believer, in consequence of his faith, as if he possessed a righteousness of his own entirely answerable to the demands of the law.

5. In this view of the subject, we may take occasion to inquire why believers are said *to be justified by faith*, or why faith justifies and is represented to have a more necessary and immediate influence in justification than any other grace. The reason doubtless is, that faith is a cordial acceptation of Christ and trust in him. Therefore God has seen fit to make it in a peculiar sense the condition and prerequisite of justification. Repentance and love to God are also requisite to our justification, as I have already endeavored to show. But they are not exercised immediately towards Christ, nor do they consist in an acceptation of him or trust in him; and therefore they are not represented as having the same influence or instrumentality in justification that faith has. As justification is granted wholly for Christ's sake, so it was doubtless wise in itself, and seemed wise and good to God that it should be granted to the believer *in such a way* that he should see and know that it was granted wholly and only for Christ's sake; and that as he is really and wholly dependent on Christ for this inestimable blessing, so he should be made sensible of this his dependence, and cordially consent to it. But this is faith. Besides, faith more than any other grace ascribes to all beings their proper place and character. By faith in Christ, as just now observed, we acknowledge and feel our own entire dependence on him. We see his glorious excellence and all-sufficiency, and our own sinfulness and ill-desert; and to see and feel all this is to ascribe to Christ his proper place and character, and to acknowledge and feel and assume our own. And this temper will naturally lead us to right views of Christ, and will bind us most strongly to him. Faith also makes us willing to receive justification as a free gift. It disposes us to be sincerely thankful for it, and to relish and prize it, and all its consequent blessings; and in these respects also it renders the believer the proper subject of justification and the proper heir of heaven.

6. Hence also we see that the dispute between those who hold to justification by our good works, and those who hold to justification by faith alone, is really a dispute *as to the necessity*

and efficacy of the vicarious satisfaction of Christ. If those who hold justification by works, hold also the necessity of Christ's satisfaction, and that that is the only meritorious cause of our justification, then by their doctrine of justification by works they can mean no more than that christians are justified *on occasion* of good works, and that they cannot and will not be justified but in *consequence* of repentance, and faith and such other good works as they may have had opportunity to perform, or as may be necessarily implied in regeneration and its fruits. But this is nothing inconsistent with the doctrine of justification by faith alone or by the the sole merit of Jesus Christ.

7. Besides these inferences and remarks, I might easily pass to several other *and practical improvements* of this subject. But time forbids. I would only add that we may see what a sure and glorious ground of hope and comfort the doctrine of the text affords to all true believers. It is most safe, most gracious, and fully and forever sufficient for all their wants. What a ground too for their gratitude for the Savior's grace! And by what solemn and tender obligation are all bound to accept it, and to live answerably to it! And if they do not, how inexcusable will they be, to their own consciences and to God! How base their ingratitude; how vile their abuse of mercy, and of the love and merit of Jesus Christ; and how justly will they deserve to be rejected of him when he shall come in the clouds of heaven, and with thousands and tens of thousands of angels to the judgment! If they reject him and his offered grace now, then they will be rejected of him, and his indignation and fierce wrath will be upon them forever!

If then, my hearers, you would avoid this terrible doom, accept the offered grace of Christ without delay. "Kiss the Son lest he be angry and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little." To seek him you have every encouragement, for Christ himself hath said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon." Confess him before men, and he will confess and acknowledge you before the assembled universe. Receive him, and he will give you "power to become the sons of God," and to be made "kings and priests unto him," and to reign with him in glory. Receive him *as your righteousness*, and you shall "shine as the brightness of the firmament and as stars forever and ever!"

SERMON XVII.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.*

1 Cor. 1: 23.—*But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.*

The Jews and Greeks were alike opposed to the gospel. This opposition proceeded from the same general principle, though from different pretences. The real reason of it was the depravity of their own hearts. Indeed, this always was the reason of all the opposition which has ever been made to the gospel; though it may veil itself under various pretences, as in the case of the Jews and Greeks. The Jews required a sign. They had formerly been used to miracles, and the prophets had confirmed their missions by miraculous signs. They therefore justly expected them from the Messiah. Jesus our Lord had indeed wrought many miracles, more and greater than the prophets, and sufficient and fitted to convince any who were candid. And yet they were not convinced. Nor would they have been had he, in compliance with their demands, wrought many more and greater. The same prejudice and alienation of heart from Christ and the gospel, which had hitherto shut out the light effectually, would still have produced the same effect.

The Greeks as a nation were of a different character. They sought after wisdom; were bent on the study of philosophy, and pretended that the gospel was not a system of true wisdom. It was not agreeable to their philosophy; and as it contradicted and condemned their depravity of heart and life, they were blinded to it, and it appeared to them foolishness.

Just so it is in modern times. The same objections are still made to the gospel, and they proceed from the same causes. Yet this same gospel which was to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, and which is both a stumbling-block and foolishness to modern objectors, was preached by Christ and his apostles, and is to them that believe, the power and wisdom of God.

* Preached at the ordination of Rev. Mr. Cowles, 1793.

I propose from the words of our text to inquire, 1. What it is to preach Christ crucified, and 2. In what respects the doctrine of Christ crucified, is to many a stumbling and foolishness.

I. *What is it to preach Christ crucified?* It is far more than to set forth the mere historical fact that such a person as Christ once lived on the earth. It is, I conceive, to preach the gospel in general; and in particular to preach the fact of Christ's crucifixion and death; the design of his death, and the necessity and reasons for it.

1. To preach Christ crucified is to preach *the gospel in general.* This is doubtless the meaning of our text. Christ crucified is the sum and substance of the gospel. To preach Christ crucified is to preach that Christ is the Savior and the only Savior of sinners. It is to preach our need of him and of an interest in him; his sufficiency in power, wisdom, merit and interest with the Father to procure our acceptance and salvation; his goodness and readiness in a proper way to save us however sinful, and to save us freely, "without money and without price." It is at the same time to preach up the duties of Christianity and the necessity of them to the christian character and to salvation. For Christ is not the minister of sin, but of righteousness; and the gospel as positively requires personal holiness as the law; nor is the obligation of the law abated, or at all abolished by the gospel, but is confirmed and established. The gospel does not indeed require obedience as the ground of our justification; yet it absolutely requires it as the occasion of it, and as our duty.

2. To preach Christ crucified, is to preach *the death of Christ on the cross*, or to preach a suffering Savior. It is indeed contrary to the ideas which we should have entertained, that Christ the Son of God would come into the world to suffer and die by the hands of wicked men. But God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. And in his infinite wisdom he has seen fit to put his own Son to grief, and to cause him to suffer for our sake. And in preaching the gospel these his sufferings must be made known, and the reasons of them.

3. To preach Christ crucified is to preach *the design and end of his death.* It is to preach not only the more remote end, the salvation of his people, but the more immediate end of atoning for their sins. By atonement is to be understood something done or suffered, which for the purposes of supporting the honor and dignity of the divine law and government, shall be equivalent to the punishment of the sinner according to law. Therefore the atonement made by Christ implies his substitution in the stead of the sinner who is to be saved by him; or that he suffered in the

sinner's stead, which as effectually tended to discourage transgression and excite to obedience, as the punishment of the transgressor himself according to the letter of the law would have done. That Christ did suffer as a substitute appears plain from the scriptures.

(1) As he is abundantly said to die *as a sacrifice for us*, and a sacrifice for sin. Eph. 5: 2, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." Heb. 7: 27, "Who needeth not, as those high priests, daily to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people. For this he did once when he offered up himself." Chap. 9: 22, "And without shedding of blood is no remission." Now as the sacrifices under the Mosaic dispensation were offered to make atonement for the sins of the people, and were slain in the stead of those who offered them; so in that Christ is said to die a sacrifice for us, it is implied that he died as a substitute for the sins of his people.

That the ancient sacrifices were offered under the Mosaic dispensation by way of atonement for sin, is manifest, as by other texts, so by Lev. 1: 2—5. Here we are told that the man who brought the sacrifice, was to lay his hand on the head of the beast offered, and it should be accepted for him, to make atonement for him. And with regard to the scape-goat, the priest, in behalf of the whole people, was to lay his hands on the head of the goat, and to confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel. This transaction plainly implied, that those sacrifices were the substitutes of those who offered them, and that when the beast was killed, the suffering and death which the former deserved, were transferred to the latter, and thus an atonement was made, and the substitute was accepted instead of the transgressor.

Therefore when Christ is said to be sacrificed for us, it must mean that he was substituted and died in our stead, to make atonement for us *really*, as the ancient sacrifices did *typically*. It is expressly declared, that it was the blood of those ancient sacrifices which made the atonement, so far as they did make atonement. Lev. 17: 11, "For the life of the flesh is in the *blood*, and I have given it to you upon the altar, *to make an atonement* for your souls; for it is the *blood* that maketh atonement for the soul." Therefore we are said to be redeemed by "the blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." And in Heb. 9: 8—14, it is said that "Christ by one offering of himself as a sacrifice for sins, hath perfected" or perfectly justified his people; and elsewhere he is called "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Now if we consider Christ as the substitute of sinners, as obeying in their stead and thus making atonement, all this is plain and intelligible. But if we deny this to be the design of Christ's death, how can this representation of it be at all understood? I know it is said that "Christ in his death is represented as a sacrifice, because the great object of his death was the establishment of that religion by which the world is to be reformed, and in consequence of which the divine being is rendered propitious to men; and that the death of Christ is compared to a sacrifice, because he gave his life in the cause of virtue and of God; and more especially to a sacrifice for sin, because his death and resurrection were necessary to the confirmation of that gospel by which sinners are brought to repentance, and thereby reconciled to God." (Priestly's Familiar Illustrations, pp. 48—50.) But was this the object of the ancient sacrifices? Was the lamb literally slain from the foundation of the world, slain to confirm, and give evidence of the divine original of some form of religion? The sacrifice of the lamb was indeed a rite of religion, but what proof was it that the religion of which it was a rite was instituted by God? And how (on this plan) did the death of Christ establish, prove or confirm the christian religion, in any other sense than the deaths of the apostles confirmed it on the supposition, that he was a mere man, as is holden by those who deny his atonement, or than the deaths of prophets under the Old Testament confirmed the religion instituted by Moses? Christ did indeed die a martyr to his own doctrine; and so did both the apostles and ancient prophets. But are they ever said to die a sacrifice for us, and to redeem and save us? Or are they called the Saviors, the Redeemers of mankind? And are they said to have come to seek and to save that which was lost? Yet if Christ was a Savior and Redeemer in no other sense than that he preached repentance and a religion which happily tended to reform mankind and has in fact reformed them; why may not the apostles and prophets as properly be called saviors and redeemers as he?

As to Christ's resurrection, this was indeed a confirmation of the gospel as it was a miraculous and divine attestation in favor of Christ and his religion. But so was the resurrection of Dorcas a miraculous and divine attestation in favor of Peter and the religion which he preached; and the resurrection of Eutychus was a miraculous and divine attestation in favor of Paul and of the religion which he preached. But neither Dorcas nor Eutychus, neither Peter nor Paul, is said to be the savior or redeemer of sinners.

(2) Christ is said to be *the propitiation for our sins.* 1 John

2: 1, "And he is the *propitiation* for our sins." Rom. 3: 25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." A *propitiation*, is an offering made to render a person propitious, or favorably disposed to some other person. Such was Christ as he offered himself a sacrifice to God to render him propitious to men. This directly teaches the substitution and atonement of Christ. But according to those who oppose the doctrine of the atonement, Christ is a propitiation for our sins in this sense only, that he taught and exhibited the most excellent motives to repentance and reformation, and by these leading sinners to repentance, he brought it to pass, that God became propitious to them. But in the same sense it may be said, that the apostle Paul and the prophet Isaiah made propitiation for our sins.

(3) Christ is also said to be *made sin for us*. 2 Cor. 5: 21, "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." If this mean that he was made a sin offering, it confirms the doctrine that Christ was substituted for us as a sacrifice, and so made atonement. If it mean, as I apprehend, that he was for us treated and made to suffer in the same manner as if he had been a sinner, that we might be treated through him as if we had been righteous, it seems more directly to establish the doctrine for which we plead. But according to the scheme of those who oppose the doctrine of atonement, this text must mean that Christ fell a sacrifice in the cause of virtue as most or all of his apostles did and many other christians; and so they were made sin for us in the same manner that he was.

(4) Christ is abundantly said to *redeem* us, to be our *redeemer*, and to have obtained eternal redemption for us, etc. He is also said to give his life a ransom for many, and a ransom for all. This naturally means that some satisfaction was made for us, in consequence of which we are delivered from bondage. But if, as some pretend, the redemption of Christ means his delivering man from sin only by his precepts, examples and previous promises, which he exhibited as a mere man, in what other sense has he redeemed us, than the prophets and apostles did? And if his giving his life a ransom for us, mean that he laid down his life as an example, and for our instruction to persuade us to virtue, in the same sense every martyr has given his life a ransom for us.

It is pleaded however, that Moses is called a deliverer or redeemer, and that God is said to have redeemed Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and yet he did not pay a price or make

satisfaction in order to procure their deliverance; but redeemed them by the mere exertion of power and wisdom. As to Moses, as he was a remarkable type of Christ, he is properly enough called a redeemer. He remarkably represented Christ in many parts of his redemption, though not in making atonement. And the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt was a remarkable type of the deliverance and salvation of the Church, the spiritual Israel, and therefore may properly be called a redemption; though it does not represent it in every particular, and especially in this, that an atonement was made in order to the redemption of the church.

(5) Christ is said *to bear the sins* of men. Isaiah 53: 11, "He shall bear their iniquities." 1 Pet. 2: 24, "Who his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Heb. 9: 28, "So Christ was once offered, to bear the sins of many." Supposing as the adversaries of the doctrine of the atonement contend, that the word "bear" means to remove, yet how was Christ offered to remove the iniquities of men in any other sense than all martyrs are, unless it be this, that he was offered to remove the guilt of their sin, or their liableness to punishment, by making a proper atonement? And in what other sense did he, agreeably to Peter's declaration bear our sins in his own body on the tree, unless we will say that Peter himself too bare our sins in his own body on the tree, when he was crucified? If Christ bare our sins in his body on the tree in this sense only, that in his death on the cross he exhibited motives to repentance, this was done by Peter too, in his death on the cross, and by every other crucified martyr.

(6) Christ is said to be *made a curse for us.* Gal. 3: 10, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." This betokens his suffering the curse of the divine law, or what was equivalent to it, in our stead. To say that Christ was made a curse, because the manner of his death was similar to that by which those died who were under the law deemed accursed; viz., by hanging on a tree, is to say, that Christ died a curse in no other sense than Peter, or any martyr who may have been crucified.

(7) We are said to be *forgiven and justified for the sake of Christ, and in his name.* 1 John 2: 12, "Because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." 1 Cor. 6: 4, "But ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." These texts naturally import, that for the sake of the atonement or merit of Christ, we are forgiven and justified. As to the objection to this construction of these texts taken from Gen. 26: 24, "Fear not, I am with

thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake ;" and from other texts in which God is entreated " to remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to forgive the sin of their posterity ;" it is to be observed that God bound himself by covenant with those patriarchs to bless them and their posterity. And when God says to Isaac, " I will bless thee for my servant Abraham's sake," the meaning doubtless is, that he would bless Isaac, on account of the covenant which he had made with Abraham and in fulfilment of that covenant, and the promises of it. And when afterward (Deut. 9: 27,) Moses pleaded that God would " remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and not look on the sin of that people," he doubtless had respect to the same covenant which was first made with Abraham, and afterward renewed with Isaac and Jacob. That this was the real meaning of Moses in Deut. 9: 27, is manifest from Exod. 32: 13, in which the transaction is recorded to which he refers in Deut. 9: 27, " Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel thy servants to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of, will I give to thy seed, and they shall inherit it forever." In this we see Moses pleads, not the personal righteousness or merit of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as the ground of the divine favor to their posterity, but the covenant which God had made with them, and the promises of that covenant.

It is further to be observed, that the Israelites are never said to be forgiven for the name's sake of Abraham, or to be justified in the name of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And the reason doubtless is, that this means something different from pardoning them on account of promises which he made to those their ancestors. To justify in *the name* of Christ, or in the name of the Lord Jesus, means, as is conceded by those who most violently oppose the doctrine of atonement, to justify " *as Christ*, or in the place of Christ." Thus our Lord says, " Many shall come in my name," that is in my place or character, and pretending to be what I am, the Messiah. And again, " the Comforter, whom the Father shall send in my name," that is, in my place. Now this concession contains all that we plead for. Believers are justified " *as Christ or in the place of Christ* ;" or as if they were Christ and were possessed of his merit ; or, as some speak, as viewed and considered as in Christ and one with him. They are justified in the place or stead of Christ, and as if they had personally wrought out everything that is satisfactory and amiable in him, even as he suffered and died in their place and stead, and as if he had been guilty of all their sins. So that it seems, the opposers themselves

of this doctrine can put no construction on this scriptural phrase, but what fully implies the substitution and atonement of Christ.

4. To preach Christ crucified is to preach *the necessity and reasons* of Christ's substitution and atonement. It seems that Christ did die, not only as a martyr, but as a substitute to atone for the sins of his people. We are now to inquire, whether this measure was necessary, and for what reason it was so.

(1) We may argue the necessity of Christ's dying for this end, *from the very fact itself.* We cannot imagine that either God the father or his son Jesus Christ would have ever consented to the death of Christ for the end mentioned, unless it had been of absolute necessity. God never does anything in vain; and as Christ was his only begotten and well beloved son, so we may be sure that he did not delight in his misery, and would never have permitted and much less himself have inflicted it, unless it had been necessary. With equal strength may we argue from the wisdom of Christ, that he himself would never have consented to endure the misery of the cross if it had not been necessary.

(2) We argue the necessity of his death from express *declarations of scripture.* "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved; neither is there salvation in any other." "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer." "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." "If righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." And with the same force may we argue, that if righteousness or justification came by mere sovereign goodness without an atonement, then Christ is dead in vain. For Christ's death was no more necessary to establish the christian religion, and by that to lead sinners to repentance and acceptance with God than it was necessary to establish, and to lead them to obey the moral law, that they might obtain acceptance by that. If then the apostle means, that if righteousness came by the moral law, Christ is dead in vain, he is dead in vain if righteousness came by repentance and reformation. For these are a conformity to the moral law. And he is truly dead in vain, unless he died to make atonement for sin, because obedience to the law, repentance and reformation might have been obtained without his death.

Again; if acceptance, pardon and life, be by repentance and reformation, then they are by the moral law, and in the same sense as they are by repentance and reformation; for these are works of the law and a conformity to it. But the moral law had been given. Therefore there had been a law given which could

have given life, and therefore by the authority of an inspired apostle, Christ is dead in vain ; which is absurd. Of course therefore pardon and life cannot be by repentance and reformation only, but must be by the death, substitution and atonement of Christ.

(3) The necessity of Christ's death and atonement may be argued *from rational considerations*. If repentance, including reformation, be all that is necessary to pardon and acceptance with God, then the glory of God, and the good and prosperity of his kingdom require no more. Whatever these require, and nothing more, is necessary in order to pardon. But the kingdom of God is the universe taken as a system ; and the declarative glory of God is the highest perfection, good or prosperity of this system. If therefore the good of the universal system require no more in order to the pardon of the sinner than his bare repentance and reformation, then the glory of God requires no more. Again, if the good of the universe require no more than the repentance and reformation of the sinner in order to his pardon, then justice requires no more. For whenever a crime is committed against any community and the government of it, whether it be a republic, a kingdom or an empire, if there be no substitution or atonement, the crime deserves just such a punishment as the public good requires. The requirement of the public good is the exact measure of justice in this case. Now therefore if the public good of the universe require no more of the sinner in order to his pardon, than that he repent and reform, then this is all that justice requires of him, and he justly deserves no other punishment than this. But this is no punishment at all, no evil, but an invaluable good. Therefore sin by which he deserves no more, is no moral evil, no crime at all, which is absurd ; and consequently the principle from which it follows, that mere repentance and reformation are all that is necessary to pardon and acceptance with God, is absurd also. But if we allow that sin is a crime, a moral evil, it deserves some punishment, and the general good of the universe requires that punishment, and consequently does not admit that the sinner be acquitted from it, but in consequence of something done or suffered which is equivalent to what his punishment would be according to strict justice ; and this is the very atonement for which we plead.

The great plea of the opposers of the atonement is that God's infinite goodness secures pardon to the penitent in consequence of his repentance only. But the infinite goodness of God seeks invariably what the general good of the universe requires, and that only. Therefore if the goodness of God require the penitent to be pardoned in consequence of his repentance only, the general good requires

his pardon in that case and of course does not admit of his punishment. But if the general good do not admit that the penitent be punished, justice does not admit of it; for the measure of justice, when no atonement is made, is the general good. And if justice do not admit of his punishment, he deserves no punishment, and sin is no crime, and there is no grace in his acquittal. Yet the opposers of the atonement are great advocates for free grace in pardon; and it is truly surprising that they do not see their own perfect inconsistency. Certainly there is no free grace in pardoning that which is no crime. And certainly that is no crime which deserves no punishment. And that deserves no punishment which, there being no atonement, the general good does not require to be punished, frowned upon, or restrained by some penalty.

It is further to be observed that this scheme of forgiveness on bare repentance and reformation, overthrows all moral government. It does so, as it enervates and overthrows the moral law. The moral law is the law whereby God requires of us a certain course of moral conduct on a certain penalty. But if this threaten no penalty beside repentance and reformation, it threatens no penalty, no evil at all, but a blessing. Consequently it is no law, no authoritative injunction, nor is any moral government to be maintained by it. And besides; certainly that is no rule of government the violation of which implies no moral evil and exposes to no punishment.

Any human government in the world would be dissolved and all authority in it abolished, if it were to proceed on the maxim of pardoning all crimes on bare repentance. And as we have no other way to form an idea of God but to ascribe to him in an infinite degree all the perfections of a human spirit, abstracting all imperfection, so we have no way to form an idea of the divine government but by ascribing to it everything excellent in human governments abstracting all imperfections.

Thus we see not only the necessity of an atonement in order to forgiveness; but the reason why it is necessary, which is, that without it the law and government of God would be weakened, dishonored and in a degree at least dissolved; just as any human law and government would be weakened by suffering the lawless and disobedient to pass with impunity and without measures taken to support that law and government.

II. We come now to consider *in what respects the doctrine of Christ crucified, is to many a stumbling-block and foolishness*; or, what are the principal objections to this doctrine urged by the opposers of it. Of these there are several. It is objected,

1. That it is *incredible* that Christ, a divine person, should die for sinners. *Answer.* If this be incredible it must be so, either because it is incredible that one should be guilty of so great a sin as to make so great atonement necessary; or because it is incredible that God should have so much goodness in him as to be willing to give his Son, and his Son have so much goodness as to be willing to give himself to die for us. As to the first supposed ground of incredibility, that our demerit cannot be so great as to require so great an atonement, it is to be observed, that we are very inadequate judges of our own demerit, both because of our ignorance and incapacity to determine in this case, and because we are always prepossessed in our own favor. Still, clear light may be obtained on the subject if we candidly attend to the voice of reason and revelation. Once allow that all men are saved from some punishment, and it follows that they are saved from an endless punishment. It is plain by that, that whoever are saved are saved by free grace. Now either all men are to be saved, or they are not. If all men are *not* to be saved, then some suffer an endless punishment. If some suffer an endless punishment, doubtless endless punishment is just and deserved by them. But an endless punishment is an infinite evil. This therefore is deserved by all men; and that sin by which they deserve an infinite natural evil, is doubtless an infinite moral evil. But no wonder infinite sin or moral evil requires an atonement of infinite value. Thus on the supposition that all are not finally to be saved, it appears that sin is an infinite evil, and requires an infinite atonement. It is not incredible then that such an atonement is provided.

Let us take the other supposition, that all men are to be saved. On this supposition all are to be saved from some punishment. This punishment is either temporary or endless. If it be endless, it is just and deserved because threatened by a just God. But if we deserve an endless punishment sin is an infinite evil and so requires an infinite atonement. But if the punishment from which all are saved be a temporary punishment, it must be either that very punishment which some suffer in hell, or a shorter punishment or a temporary punishment of longer duration. But it cannot be that very punishment which the damned suffer, as that by the very supposition is suffered by some. Nor can it be a shorter punishment because as they suffer a punishment which lasts for ages of ages, of course they inclusively suffer one which does not last so long as that. Nor are all men saved from a longer temporary punishment than that which the damned suffer, and which in the language of scripture is said to continue forever and ever, because no such punishment is threatened, and there-

fore they never were exposed to such a one. So that we are necessitated to come to the conclusion, that if all men shall be saved, they shall be saved from an endless punishment. But this proves that sin is an infinite evil, and requires an infinite atonement. Therefore it is not incredible that an infinite atonement has been made; and the substitution and vicarious death of Christ are not incredible on account of the smallness of our demerit.

If then the vicarious death of Christ be incredible at all, it must be incredible that God had so much goodness as to give his Son, and the Son had so much goodness as to give himself, to die for sinners. But I presume, that all who allow that the goodness of God is infinite, will allow that it is adequate to the expression of goodness made in the gift of his Son; and that they will allow the same as to the goodness of Christ. But few if any will deny that God is infinitely good. Especially those who declaim so vehemently on the free and infinite grace of God, as all those do who oppose the doctrine of Christ's atonement, cannot pretend that God's goodness is not such as to afford the unspeakable gift of his Son.

2. It is objected that the atonement of Christ, if it were ever so real, *would not answer the end* which it is supposed to answer; viz. the same end as was designed to be answered by the threatening and punishment of the sinner. This end is the restraint of others. Others by seeing the sinner punished may rationally be supposed to be restrained from that conduct which brought him to that punishment. And if their substitute must suffer in future, they might, from compassion to him, avoid sin. But when he has suffered already, what motive is there to restrain any from sin? This is the objection. To it I answer,— That though the motive of compassion to Christ our substitute cannot now operate to restrain men from sin, since he has suffered already all that he ever is to suffer, yet in his death there are other very powerful motives exhibited to restrain men from sin. In his death we see God's hatred of transgression and his determination to punish it, as clearly as in the damnation of the wicked. Therefore if the consideration of the latter tends to restrain men from sin, why not the former? It is true that compassion toward Christ will not be a motive to restrain from sin, any more than compassion to the damned is. And yet it will not be pretended that the damnation of the wicked is not a motive to restrain sinners from sin. And in the same sense the death of Christ is also a motive to restrain us from it. Though Christ has already died, yet no man will escape the curse of the law on ac-

count of his sufferings, unless he repent and forsake sin and walk in newness of life. And if any presume that he shall not be punished because Christ has died, and thence take occasion to be remiss in his duty and indulge himself in sin, he may be sure he is deluding himself and that he is going fast in the road which leads to destruction.

3. It is also objected that the atonement of Christ *is inconsistent with the free grace* of God in the pardon of the sinner. But this objection seems to arise from a mistaken idea of the doctrine. To make satisfaction for another by the literal payment of a debt is indeed inconsistent with grace in the forgiveness of the debt. But to make satisfaction for a crime by the vicarious suffering of another person, is not at all inconsistent with grace in the pardon of the criminal. For as long as he deserves not impunity, whatever may be the merit or demerit of his friend or substitute, so long his impunity is the fruit of grace. And the suffering of his substitute makes no alteration in his character.

4. Another objection is, that it is *not just* that the innocent should suffer the punishment due to the guilty. If either must suffer for the other, it seems that the guilty ought rather to suffer for the innocent than the innocent for the guilty. *Answer.* If it would indeed have been ever so unjust provided the innocent had not consented, yet his consent entirely removes the objection. Suppose a parent were by some arbitrary authority punished by a fine for the crime of his son, he would doubtless have just reason to complain of injury. But if the parent consents to pay the very same fine in behalf of his son, no pretence of injury to the parent can be made. So if Christ without his consent had been compelled to suffer in the stead of sinners, it might have been matter of complaint and wonder. But since he has consented and voluntarily offered himself to do and suffer agreeably to the will of God, and even freely chosen it, there is no foundation for the objection.

5. It is objected, that "if it was necessary in the nature of things that the justice of God should be satisfied before any sin could be pardoned, then as Christ as well as the Father is God, *the justice of Christ ought to have been satisfied in the first place, and if so, what other infinite being has made satisfaction to him?* And if the divine nature of Christ required no satisfaction, why should the divine nature of the Father require any?" (Priestly.) This is easily answered by only explaining what is meant by satisfying the justice of God. The justice of God here means justice to himself as the sovereign and supreme head and guardian of the universe; and justice to himself in this view, is

justice to the universe as a system; and justice to the universe is that which secures the interest and prosperity of the universe. So that to satisfy divine justice is to satisfy the demands and secure the interests of the universal system. Therefore whatever secures the general good, satisfies divine justice. And the divine justice being thus satisfied, the satisfaction extends to not only the divine nature of the Father, but equally to the divine nature of the Son; and there is no need that another infinite person die to make satisfaction to the divine nature of the Son in particular.

6. Some again object that the doctrine of Christ's substitution and atonement *represents God as implacable and unmerciful*; as insisting on all that justice demands; unwilling to recede at all from the rigor of justice, but exacting that to the uttermost farthing. This also depends on the sense of the word justice. If the objector mean that God insists on all that distributive justice, or justice to the sinner considered in his own person admits, this is not true; for then he would insist on his eternal damnation, notwithstanding all that Christ has done or suffered. But if he mean that God insists on all which public or general justice requires, this is undoubtedly true, but the objection then comes to this only, that God insists on all which the general good, the good of his kingdom, or the good of the creation requires, and will not pardon sinners but in a way which is consistent with the general good of the creation. And is this made a matter of objection? Will any man pretend that it is required by the divine perfections, or is consistent with those perfections, to pardon sinners in a way which is inconsistent with the general good? This can never be, till goodness itself is turned into malice. Many have very wrong ideas of satisfying justice, as if it were the satisfying of a revengeful spirit. But no more is ever implied in it than is implied in a good magistrate's requiring satisfaction to the good laws of the state. It is satisfying the public good.

Therefore so far is the doctrine of atonement from representing the Deity as implacable and unmerciful, that since the atonement is no more than a measure taken by infinite wisdom to prepare the way for pardon consistently with the general good, it represents God to be as placable and as ready to show mercy as is consistent with the general good and happiness, or with the good of creatures taken collectively; and more placable, and more ready to show mercy than this, it cannot be pretended to be desirable that he should be.

I have now finished what was at first proposed;—have considered what it is to preach Christ crucified, and what are the principal objections to that doctrine. In conclusion I would address

the subject first to the pastor elect, and then to the church and congregation over whom he is to be placed as God's minister.

I. I would address the Pastor elect.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—Christ crucified is the sum and substance of the gospel. That gospel you are now to be ordained to preach, and therefore you are to preach the doctrine on which we have dwelt. This doctrine, that of the atonement, is the very essence of the evangelical system. Without it christianity is not essentially distinguished from any other religion. If there is no atonement, if Christ came only to preach repentance, then there is nothing peculiar in his office. All the prophets and apostles preached this; and so did even the heathen philosophers. And if Christ is a savior, only as a preacher of repentance, why are not they saviors also? In what sense are we saved through him or by him more than by Paul or Moses? To preach Christ and the gospel only in this sense, is to give up the whole revealed system, and to go back to the law of nature or even to paganism. If then there be any occasion, I would caution you against so great an error. I would warn you against it as another gospel, and as utterly subversive of the cross of Christ. If Christ be a savior only as a preacher of repentance, then Peter and Paul are saviors as truly as he; and why may not they be the ground of our reliance and hope as well as Jesus of Nazareth? Is it supposed that he was an inspired man? So were they. Is it said that he was the better preacher? This may be questioned. He certainly did not preach the gospel as fully as they did, its doctrines and motives and especially those drawn from a future state. Some however may say, "no matter what we deny so long as we hold to salvation by Christ." But by this they only mean salvation by the gospel; that is only by repentance and reformation. But Paul and Peter preached salvation in the same way, and therefore we may as well hold to salvation by them; and if we go so far, then we may as well hold to salvation by Seneca or Cicero. Those who hold to this bold scheme are anxious, they say, to cut off the objections of Jews and Mohammedans, and by denying Christ's divinity and atonement to prepare the way to win and receive them. But why not proceed further, and take in the Pagans? They hold what these persons would call the essence of the gospel, repentance and reformation; and as to their polytheism, this doubtless is only an error of judgment, for which they are not to be rejected. Indeed the advocates of this scheme cannot consistently reject the heathen on this account; for as they have charity for those who hold to three persons in the Godhead, that is for what they call tritheists, why not for polytheists? But

I need not caution you, my dear brother, against this system. Avoiding it, you will preach the great doctrines of the atonement. You will know nothing among your people, but Christ Jesus and him crucified. This is a solid foundation of hope. It is something to relieve the awakened conscience, and to raise up the sinner when in the clear light of God's law he sees himself as he is, and is bowed down under a deep sense of his depravity and sinfulness. The contrary doctrine can never do this. It can but give a false peace, and thus delude and ruin the soul. Therefore, my brother, not only exhibit Christ as an atoning Savior, but the entire gospel with all its doctrines and duties in its relation to him. Press too the reception of these doctrines and a compliance with these duties; for these are the great ends of all preaching. Urge the necessity of this; the obligation, the reasonableness, the advantages, the safety, the peace and satisfaction it will afford here, and the endless blessings it will secure hereafter. Press these things in all their eternal weight and in their immediate obligation. Press them by all the motives God has given, and that, whether men will hear or forbear. As Christ your master was a witness to the truth, do you bear witness to the same; and thus you may be the means of salvation to many, and at least will deliver your own soul. Be diligent to do your arduous work; to do it in tenderness, and with your might. Be thou faithful unto death and Christ shall give you a crown of life.

II. I would address the church and congregation.

MEN AND BRETHREN,—You have heard the word of exhortation to your pastor. But remember if these duties rest on him there are correspondent ones on you. If he is bound to preach Christ crucified, and the great doctrines and duties of the cross, you are bound to hear, and believe and practice. If these things which have been set forth be the sum of the gospel, then you are to be deeply and ever attentive to them, and to receive them to the salvation of your souls. These doctrines and duties, you are to remember, are connected, and that you have no evidence of your reception of the former but in your performance of the latter. I know the opposite system is flattering to human nature. To think that sin is no great evil; that there is no need of so great an atonement; that God is merciful and ever ready to forgive, and that he will forgive on mere repentance; all this is very flattering to the carnal heart. And clearly connected with this are other sentiments quite as flattering; that God is not very strict, and we are not entirely depraved; that we are naturally well disposed and with proper attention and culture of ourselves we shall grow up to virtue; and even if we do not, that God is merciful and

never made man to be damned, and especially he never *decreed* any to be damned, and therefore that we all at last shall be saved. These doctrines are suited to flatter human vanity, and to puff up self-sufficiency and self-righteousness. But as you will find no such flattering idea in the gospel, so you are not to expect them from your pastor. We trust he is not disposed to swerve from the truth, but in all its fulness and power to commend it to every one's conscience in the sight of God. We have confidence in him that he will tell you the truth plainly and faithfully, and that in all its fulness he will unfold to you the great system of the gospel. It is a connected system. Every part of it is dependent on every other part, so that none of it can be spared or taken away without its all falling to the ground. Therefore receive every part, or you will be in danger of rejecting the whole. And in the bonds of that truth let me beseech you ever to cultivate union and peace and sincere brotherly affection. Do this for your own sake, and also for the sake of your pastor, for his usefulness and your own edification, for the honor of religion, and the glory of your Redeemer. And may you and he ever walk hand in hand in the truth, you rejoicing in his instructions, and he in your growth in grace and eminent holiness, till you both come to the measure of the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. Then shall his ministry be joy to him and a rich blessing to you; and when you and he shall review it at the final day, you shall rejoice together in it forever.

SERMON XVIII.

HOLDING FAST OUR PROFESSION.*

HEBREWS 4: 14.—*Seeing then we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

THE apostle, in the preceding part of this epistle, had spoken of the sonship and divine nature of Jesus Christ, and proved from the scriptures of the Old Testament that he is equal with the Father, and that divine worship is to be paid to him. He had spoken also of the incarnation of Christ, and had shown that acting in the flesh as our high priest, he had made atonement for our sins, not by offering the blood of bulls and goats, but by his own most precious blood. And having insisted on these things, he at length proceeds to make the proper application of them to the christian Hebrews to whom he was writing. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house."

Here mentioning Christ and Moses together, he takes notice of the superiority of the former to the latter; the one being faithful only as a servant, while the other is so in the superior character of a son. Therefore Christ, being thus superior to Moses, he is the more worthy to be received, and to be believed and relied on in the great ministry which he is carrying on between God and man. And on this consideration, he exhorts them to hearken to his voice, and not to harden their hearts against Christ, as their fathers had against Moses. Those ancient Israelites had the promise of entering into and enjoying the land of Canaan, but they failed of obtaining it through unbelief. They professed indeed to believe, and to rely on the Lord Jehovah who had brought them out of Egypt; and in the fullest terms they declared that all that the Lord had said they would observe and do. But when it came to the test, it appeared that they were far from being sincere in this their profession, and that they were not

* Preached in 1771.

steadfast to it. For when they heard of the strength of the Canaanites; that their cities were walled up to heaven, and that giants dwelt in the land, their confidence in God was gone. They feared to go forward as he had commanded, and chose for themselves a leader to go back into Egypt. Therefore, for their unbelief and distrust of the power and faithfulness and goodness of God, he was wroth with them, and sware in his wrath that they should not enter into the land of rest which he promised to Abraham and his seed. And the consequence was that they perished in the wilderness.

From this sad instance of the effects of unbelief, Paul takes occasion to warn the christian Hebrews against this ruinous sin. They, like the ancient Israelites, had professed to believe in Christ as their great high priest. And fearing lest some of them, after the example of their fathers, might apostatize from their profession, the apostle most earnestly exhorts them in several passages, and especially in our text, to hold fast that profession, and to be steadfast in it. For though they had hitherto witnessed a good confession, yet so well did he know the heart of man to be deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, that he is jealous over them with a holy jealousy, lest all his labors with them should finally prove in vain, and they should fall after the same example of unbelief.

Having thus briefly considered the connection of the text with the preceding part of the epistle, I come now to a more particular consideration of the text itself. Its exhortation is to the Hebrews, urging them to continue in their christian profession, and to live and act accordingly. This is the end to which they are exhorted. And the motive mentioned to encourage them to it, is, that Christ, who is their atoning high priest, has ascended to heaven, there to plead the virtue and merit of his atonement, and to make intercession for them. This seems to be the force and spirit of the text. It may be more briefly expressed int he following proposition: *That since Christ, in the character of our high priest, has ascended into glory, this affords abundant encouragement to us to continue steadfast in our christian profession.*

In speaking on this proposition, I would show 1. That all the followers of Christ are bound to make a profession of their christian faith; and 2. That the consideration of Christ's priesthood and ascension to glory, affords abundant encouragement to them to continue steadfast in that profession.

I. *I am to show that all the followers of Christ are bound to make an open and explicit profession of their christian faith.*

The apostle is here writing to the Hebrews of his day, who

supposed themselves to be the followers of Christ. What he says, therefore, is to be understood as applicable to the same class in every age of the world; so that the teaching of the text applies to us, as well as to those to whom it was originally addressed. From it I would here show two things; *first* that all the followers of Christ are bound to make some profession, which in general may be called their christian profession; and *second* what kind of a profession this ought to be.

1. All the followers of Christ are bound *to make some profession*, which may in general be called their christian profession. This is plainly taught in the scriptures. For,

(1) A profession or confession is expressly spoken of in scripture, as the duty of all the disciples of Christ. Promises are made to those who make it in an acceptable manner, and, on the other hand, threatenings are denounced against those who neglect it. "Whosoever therefore," says Christ, "shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Here is an express promise of the future favor and friendship of Christ, made to those who in an acceptable manner confess him before men. And, on the other hand, there is an express threatening that he will disown and reject hereafter, those who do not thus confess him in this world. But could these things be so, if it were not the duty of the disciples of Christ, as such, to make at least some kind of profession? No; it is impossible. A parallel text is that in Rom. 10: 9, 10, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Here I need not repeat the observation made on the text just quoted. But one thing I would observe, and that is, that the apostle here expressly speaks of "confessing with the mouth." The language implies that it is an instituted duty that the disciples of Christ, as such, do make an open, explicit, verbal profession of some kind or other. From both these passages it is plain that some kind of profession is to be made by every disciple of Christ, as such, and that openly, "before men," and verbally, "with the mouth."

(2) The scriptures often speak in such a manner as plainly to show that all the followers of Christ, in the days of the apostles, did make a profession of some kind or other. And if this was the practice of the disciples in those days, who in all they did in the worship of God, acted under the inspection and direction of

the inspired apostles, then it is plain that we, and the disciples of Christ in every age, are bound to do the same; for it is admitted that apostolic example is equivalent to express precept, or in other words that it is as much our duty, with respect to all instituted ordinances, to follow the example and practice of the apostles, and of the churches acting under their direction, as it is to obey their express commands. But that it was the practice of the disciples of the apostolic day to make a profession of some kind or other, is evident from a variety of expressions, used both in this and in several other epistles. Our text itself is very full to this purpose. In it the apostle exhorts the Hebrew christians to "hold fast their profession." But what propriety would there be in this exhortation, if they had never made any profession? He calls this *their* profession, or as it may be understood, *the* profession; that is, a profession which they all, as christians, made, and which was so well known among them, that it was, by way of eminence, called *the* profession. The like expression we have again in chapter 10: 23, "Let us hold fast the *profession* of our faith without wavering;" and again, in chapter 3: 1, "Wherefore holy brethren, consider the apostle and high priest of our *profession*;" and still again, in the sixth verse of the same chapter, "Whose house we are, if we hold fast the *confidence*, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." The word here rendered "confidence," is παῤῥησία, which signifies a bold, confident, undaunted profession or declaration of anything, and which, as here used by the apostle, signifies a bold, undaunted profession of the christian faith. Thus commentators seem to understand it, and one of them (Matthew Henry) thus explains these words: "If we maintain a bold and open profession of the truths of the gospel." On the whole, then, this text seems plainly to show that the primitive christians made some kind of profession, which was one of their distinguishing characteristics in the sight of men. The same expression we have in chapter 10: 35, of this same epistle. "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence," or bold profession, "which hath great recompense of reward." Such evidence is there in this single epistle that christians are bound to make a profession of some kind.

But the same thing is evident from the other epistles. 1 Tim. 6: 12, "Whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good *profession* before many witnesses." Tit. 1: 16, "They *profess* that they know God, but in works they deny him." 1 Tim. 2: 10, "Which becometh women *professing* godliness." 2 Cor. 9: 13, "They glorify God for your *professed* subjection to the gospel of Christ." The same thing is further evident from

the first epistle of John, throughout the whole of it. This epistle was written with the design of convincing false professors of their hypocrisy; and it abounds in such expressions as these: "If we say we have fellowship with him;" "he that *saith* I know him;" "he that *saith* he abideth in him;" "he that *saith* he is in the light;" "if a man *say* I love God," etc. Now from these expressions of the apostle it is manifest that the early christians were accustomed to *say*, *declare* or *profess* something, whereby they were distinguished, at least in the sight of men, from the rest of the world; and according to which if they did not live, they were, as the apostle expressly declares, "liars." For if it was not the common practice of christians in that day, thus to make a *profession* of their faith, why should the apostle take this method to convince hypocrites? On the contrary supposition, there might not be one in thousands that did *say* or *profess* these things. It would, then, be a very unlikely way to convince hypocrites, as these might not be one in thousands that made the profession, a failure in the performance of which the apostle declares to be hypocrisy. The phrases used, then, not only teach that there is a christian profession which all the disciples of Christ are obliged to make; but also that those who make this profession, and live not according to it, are "liars," false to the truth and to their own solemn vows.

Having thus shown from the scriptures that it is the duty of christians to make some profession whereby they shall distinguish themselves from the rest of the world, I now proceed to inquire,

2. What *kind of a profession* this is to be. And here I would lead your thoughts to only a few of the texts already quoted. Heb. 10: 23, "Let us hold fast to the profession of our *faith* without wavering." This text shows that we, and all christians ought to make a profession of the christian faith. Here it may possibly be asked, what faith is this that we are bound to profess? Is it the precious faith of God's elect, or the mere intellectual faith that devils may have while they tremble? Such a question, however, answers itself. Or if a further answer be insisted on, I reply, that we are to profess the very same faith to which the apostles exhort us, and which they ever preached. And whether this be the faith of the elect or of devils, I leave to yourselves to judge. The nature of this profession further appears from 1 Tim. 2: 10, "Which becometh women professing *godliness*." Godliness, then, we must also profess. But what kind of godliness? The answer again is, that which Jesus Christ and his apostles preached, the entire consecration of the heart and life to God. The nature of this profession further appears from 2 Cor. 9: 13,

"They glorify God for your professed *subjection* to the gospel of Christ." To be subject to the gospel, is a very forcible and comprehensive expression, signifying a hearty submission to, and compliance with all the terms and duties of the gospel. The nature of this profession is further evident from several of the expressions already quoted from the first epistle of John. By them it appears that the primitive christians were wont to *say* or *profess*, "that they *had fellowship* with God;" "that they *knew* him;" "that they *abode* in him;" "that they were *in the light*;" "that they *loved God*," etc. And if so, then it is our duty to say or profess the same. And no other profession, short of this, have we any warrant to make, from the practice of the primitive christians. All these, and indeed all similar expressions, however various in words, yet in substance and reality amount to the same thing; and all imply real reconciliation to God, supreme love to him, and sincere acquiescence in the gospel of Christ as the only Savior. And whoever can consistently, and with truth, make this profession, will undoubtedly share a glorious part with the church of the first born in heaven.

Having thus seen that all the disciples of Christ are bound to profess him before the world, we pass as proposed,

II. *To the fact that the consideration of the priesthood and ascension of Christ, is an abundant encouragement to us, to hold fast our profession.*

And here we may inquire,

1. What is implied in *holding fast* our profession. Two things seem manifestly to be implied in it.

(1) The first is, that we continue stedfast and unshaken in our profession of the gospel, even to the end of our lives. And this we are bound to do, let the temptations to renounce and apostatize from it be ever so great. These temptations were very great in the times of the apostle. Then those that made this profession, and continued steadfast in it, thereby exposed themselves to persecution, to the loss of their worldly estate, and even to death itself. And by these temptations, some were induced to turn back from their profession, and give up their hopes in a crucified Savior. And the temptations to the same thing are great in our own day. For though by this profession, we may not expose ourselves to the loss of worldly goods, or of life, still we may be exposed by it to the reproach and contempt of men, to be persecuted with their tongues, and to have our names cast out as evil. But notwithstanding these, and all other temptations, we must still hold fast our profession, steadfast unto the end. We must set ourselves firmly against all that is inconsist-

ent with our high vocation, and be willing through good or evil report, to be faithful to Jesus Christ. And if God in his providence require it, we must be willing to suffer the loss of our worldly substance, or the loss even of all things, that we may obtain that inheritance that never fades away.

(2) The other thing implied in holding fast our profession, is, that in our conduct and practice we live up to the profession we have made. To do otherwise is practically to renounce that profession. And what does it signify that we make, in ever so strong terms, the gospel profession, if at the same time we give the lie to our profession in our practice? What does it signify that we "*say* we know God, if in works we deny him;" that we say we "have fellowship with him," if we still "walk in darkness and do the works of darkness;" that we say we "abide in him," if we "walk not as he walked;" that we say we are in the light and love of God, if by our fruits we give not evidence that so it is in truth? It is a maxim universally true, that actions speak louder than words. Therefore let us say and profess what we will, yet if we live not up to what we profess, neither God, or angels, or men, will believe our profession. In the express words of John we "are liars and do not the truth. We come now,

2. To show how the consideration of the ascension of our Savior to glory, *affords us strong encouragement* thus to hold fast our profession. Here I would say, it affords us abundant encouragement to this end, inasmuch as the intercession which he makes for us, in consequence of his ascension, will be effectual to secure eternal rewards to us if we do indeed hold fast our profession. Christ has passed into the heavens, not in a private capacity, but as our high priest, and as the head and representative of his church before God. Having made atonement for our sins in his flesh, he is now ascended to his Father, to plead the merit of his obedience and of his sufferings unto death, thus to procure the application of the blessed fruits of all that he has done, to his own people. And all this implies that they shall be prepared for, and at last received to the same glory to which he is exalted. But this inconceivable glory and happiness, he will obtain for none but those that hold fast their profession steadfast unto the end. And to all such, they are sure. For such he has gone to prepare a place, that where he is they may be also, and that there they may receive their reward. This, then, is the motive which the apostle sets before us in the text, to encourage and animate us to continue steadfast in our christian profession, and to live up to it in our practice. And is not this encouragement sufficient? Is it not abundant? If thus the sympathies, and the prayers of

Christ are with us, shall we think much of the trials through which we must pass, or the obedience we must yield, in being found faithful to our profession? Shall not these seem but light things to us, when there is so glorious a reward laid up for us in heaven? Doubtless it becomes us, with the apostle, to "reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Thus, as proposed, I have endeavored to show, that it is an institution of the gospel, and therefore the duty of all the disciples of Christ, to make some profession, whereby they shall be united among themselves, and distinguished from the unbelieving world; and also, from the scriptures, what kind of a profession this must be. I have also considered what is implied in holding fast this profession, and what encouragement to this is afforded us by the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. In a word I would endeavor to improve the whole subject. And,

1. We may infer from it that the ancient practice of our churches, in insisting that those who offer themselves as candidates for admission to them should make a public profession of their christian faith, is entirely according to the practice and institution of the apostles. Some hold the opinion that the children of christian parents, when they become adult, may be received to the church and to all its ordinances, without making any profession at all. But this, as is evident, would at once set aside the doctrine which has now been proved from the scriptures. It may be said, however, that their very offering of themselves, and coming to the special ordinances of the church, are to be considered as a profession of their faith, and so supersede a verbal profession. To this I answer: that if this be indeed the settled and established meaning of such transactions, and all parties concerned agree to understand them in this light, then it is as real a profession as if it were made in words, and therefore is no objection to the doctrine maintained. But if it be meant that any and all, who are the children of christian parents, may enter the church without anything on their part which is fully understood as a solemn profession of their personal faith in Jesus Christ and his gospel, such a doctrine is subversive of the plain teachings of the New Testament, and if acted on, would soon fill our churches with corrupt and unworthy members, who would dishonor the name and injure and reproach the cause of the Redeemer.

2. From what has been said we infer that the gospel knows and recognizes no other profession than this of which we have

spoken, viz. a profession of christian faith, of godliness, of subjection to the commands and spirit of the Redeemer, and of the knowledge and love of God. As to any other profession of mere morality, or speculative faith, or sincerity of belief or conduct, the gospel of Christ knows nothing of it. That gospel teaches us that there is "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism;" and this one faith it requires us to profess. And as to sincerity, we read of no other but *godly* sincerity; and this also ought to be included in our profession. And no other kind of profession does the gospel teach, as that which as christians we are bound to make.

3. We may also hence be impressed with the very solemn profession that we have made, and the sacred obligations with which we have bound ourselves to God and his service. In making that christian profession, which all of us who are members of the church of Christ have made, we have professed the one faith of the gospel; that is, that we believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be the only and an all-sufficient Savior, and that we come to him, trusting in, and relying on him as such, renouncing our own righteousness, and despairing of any acceptance with God on account of it. We have professed to be the disciples and followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, ever striving to cherish his spirit, and to imitate his example. We have made a profession of godliness, that is, of true piety and real holiness; and of subjection to the gospel, that is, that we submit to the method of salvation which is therein proposed, and cordially and practically comply with the terms of it. We have professed to be in the light, to know God, to love him, to abide in him, and to have fellowship with him. Such is the solemn profession which we have made, before God and angels and men. May the Holy Spirit enable us to be faithful to it, so that we may ever "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called."

4. Let us then all seriously and candidly inquire, whether we have continued in, and lived up to this our high profession. Most naturally does our subject lead us to inquire into our state and character, and particularly whether we have hitherto held fast our christian profession. Let me even lead your thoughts further back, and inquire with what views it was that you at first made this profession. Did you, in doing it, act understandingly, knowing the full import of the solemn transaction, and of all that was said and implied in it? Did you enter upon it in the fear of God, and with a full sense of its solemnity resting on your soul? And if so, how have you conducted since? Have you lived as becomes those who profess godliness? It becomes those who *profess* godliness to *practice* it, and to live in its practice from day

to day. And such is the nature of real godliness that they who profess, *will* practice it; and whosoever does not practice it, is a stranger to it. Further, have you lived and conducted as becomes those who profess to be subject to the gospel, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you show that the spirit of the gospel, the same spirit that was in Christ, is also in your hearts? Do you obey the laws of Christ, and the rules and precepts of the gospel? Do you show, by your lives and conduct, that you indeed love God supremely, and that you have fellowship with him? This is what you have professed; and if you have lived and conducted accordingly, you have hitherto held fast your profession. But if not, then you have, at least practically, denied and betrayed the cause which you have professed to espouse and maintain; and erelong you are to answer for it to him whom you have mocked by your professions. But however it may have been with you hitherto, be entreated,

5. Now to comply with the exhortation of the apostle in the text. Be exhorted to hold fast your profession, and to live according to it. And as motives to this, consider,

(1) That unless you do this, you have no evidence that you are the disciples of Christ. Defect in this one point is enough to counterbalance all other evidences. Without it you have no sufficient evidence of discipleship, either to your own minds, or to the view of others. 1 John 2: 3—5, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him." How full and explicit is all this, and that both negatively and positively! He that keepeth not the commandments of Christ does not know him, and can have no evidence that he does. And on the other hand, he who does keep his commandments, does know, and has evidence that he knows, and loves, and is in him.

(2) As another motive, consider that unless you live up to your profession, you will deeply dishonor it. This is the way that the christian profession is come into so much contempt in the eyes of the world, that many who bear the christian name do not live up to their profession. If they would but do this, and if all christians would do it, that profession would be honorable in the esteem even of a sinful world. But when so many profess one thing, and do and practise quite the reverse, the men of the world, and even the candid and honest among them, are stumbled and confounded, and perhaps led to doubt the reality of religion,

and to be careless as to seeking it for themselves. And while this is the sad result with even the candid and honest, the profane and malicious will indulge themselves in open ridicule and contempt. And thus Christ and his holy religion are reproached and dishonored. Beware then, my brethren, lest by living unworthily of your profession, and thus "breaking the law," you dishonor God, and so cause "his name and doctrine to be blasphemed." "It must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." Let none, then, "put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall," in the way of his brother, or of those without; but let your conversation be such, that those who would otherwise "speak against you as evil doers," seeing your good works, may be led to "glorify God in the day of visitation." Evermore, "watch and pray that you enter not into temptation;" that you may "adorn the doctrine of God your Savior in all things;" that "your light may so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven." Let all professors do this, and then will the church look forth as the morning, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

SERMON XIX.

THE SOUL'S IMMORTALITY, AND FUTURE RETRIBUTION.*

2 TIMOTHY 1 : 10.—*Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

THIS Lecture was designed not only to exhibit positive arguments in favor of Christianity, but to refute the objections and doctrines of infidelity. In a controversy like this, it is not best to be always on the defensive. It is often useful to act on the offensive; to make attack; and like Hannibal, who succeeded best in Italy, to carry the war into the heart of the enemy's country.

Deists oppose not only revelation in general, but the several most important doctrines of it; particularly the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments. This doctrine, as represented in the scriptures, is one main cause of infidelity. If there be a future state, infidels are afraid for the consequences. They are conscious of their own impiety and immorality, or at least of their neglect of true virtue and religion; and therefore if there be a future state of rewards and punishments, they expect that punishment will be their portion. The prospect of this is dreadful; and therefore they search for arguments against the reality of such a state. They see clearly that such a state is taught in the scriptures, and therefore they reject them, and console themselves in infidelity, apprehending that there is no evidence of a future state but that which the scriptures afford. It will, then, be advantageous to the cause of christianity, if it can be shown that the infidel has no such ground of consolation; that the light of nature teaches a future state of rewards and punishments; and that no man has any well-founded motive of this kind to reject revelation. This I shall endeavor to show, by *offering the arguments which the light of nature affords in favor of the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments.*

* Preached at the Lecture instituted by the General Association, on the day before the Commencement at Yale College, New Haven, Conn. Sept. 1795.

These arguments will be drawn, 1. From the soul's immateriality; and 2. From several moral considerations. And,

I. *The soul is an immaterial substance, and therefore naturally immortal.*;—

That is, it is not capable of destruction by a dissolution of its parts, as all material bodies are. I acknowledge that this consideration is not decisive in favor of the real and actual immortality of the soul. Yet all opposers of its immortality, oppose also its immateriality, and thus show that they consider its immateriality as an obstacle in their way which it concerns them to remove. As they assert the soul to be a material substance, it seems proper, 1. To consider their ideas of matter and of the soul; 2. To examine their arguments to disprove the soul's immateriality; and 3. To show by positive arguments that the soul is immaterial.

1. I shall briefly consider their ideas of matter, and of the human soul. It is not strange that on these subjects they should differ among themselves; and it is not worth while to follow, or even to relate the opinions of all the opposers of the soul's immateriality. It will be sufficient, if I consider that, which in modern times is the most noted, and perhaps has been the most labored, and supported by the most learned arguments.

Matter is defined by a late writer, "to be an extended substance possessed of certain powers of attraction and repulsion;"* and it is said, "take away attraction and repulsion and matter vanishes," p. 245. Solidity and impenetrability is denied to belong to matter, and it is said that it is "a compages of centres of attraction and repulsion." Therefore it is held that matter thinks, reflects, reasons, etc.; and as it is said to consist of mere centres of attraction and repulsion, these centres, void of all solidity, must think, and reason, etc. Matter, as just now observed, is said to be an *extended* substance; and a compact body is defined to be a compages of centres of attraction and repulsion. At the same time, however, it is held that a single one of these centres is indivisible, and does not occupy any portion of space, p. 249, etc. If so, then any number of these centres, or any compages of them, can occupy no space. They may, indeed, define or mark out a certain portion of space. But this portion, defined by these centres or points, is no more a *substance* than any other part of space, or than space in general. How, then, can matter be called an *extended substance?* It is said that matter possesses certain powers of attraction and repulsion. Now what possesses these powers? Nothing solid or extended; but an unextended centre or mathematical point, or at most a compages of these

* Correspondence between Price and Priestly, pp. 16 and 6.

points. These points are the mere centres, to and from which the divine agency is directed in what this scheme calls attraction and repulsion. For it is allowed that attraction and repulsion are no actions of matter, but of some cause extrinsic to it; that is of the Deity. It is expressly asserted, "that the divine Being and his energy are absolutely necessary to that of every other being;" that "everything is the divine power;" (I suppose it is meant, is the *effect* of that power) that "all action is the action of God;" that "he does everything;" that "his power is the very life and soul of everything that exists, and that strictly speaking, without him we *are* as well as *can do* nothing," p. 253. The whole of matter, therefore, according to this scheme, is the divine agency, drawing or driving certain mathematical points, to or from certain other mathematical points. Now if this matter thinks, reasons, loves and hates, what is it belonging to it that does these things? It must be either these mathematical points, or the divine agency exerted in attraction and repulsion. But it is to be presumed that mere mathematical points do not reason, think, etc.; because on that supposition, not only would *all* matter think, which is not pretended; but all *space*, and every mathematical point in the universe would think. Nor is it conceived that the divine agency exerted in attraction and repulsion thinks, or is the subject of human thought. No doubt the divine mind thinks in all its actions; but it is not pretended that the divine mind is matter, or any property of matter; and we are inquiring after that thought of which matter is the subject, or which is put forth or produced by matter. If the divine agency which produces attraction and repulsion, produces at the same time thought also, then as attraction and repulsion are common to all matter, it will follow that thought is common to all matter. But this is expressly denied by the scheme on which I am remarking.

The doctrine which we are considering is, that matter thinks; and yet it is denied that matter of itself, either attracts or repels, that is, moves either itself or any other matter. But is it not strange, that it has no power either of attraction or repulsion; but that all attraction and repulsion, and therefore all motion in all matter, should be the effect of an immediate divine agency, and yet that matter should have the power, without that immediate divine agency, to think and reason, to choose and refuse, to love and hate? Surely if "everything be the divine power," or the immediate effect of it; if "the Deity do" (or immediately cause) "everything;" if "his power be the very life and soul of everything that exists, and strictly speaking without him we are, as well as can do nothing;" then, according to these concessions,

thought is the immediate effect of the divine power. As an act or action of the mind, it is the immediate effect of God's action. It is immediately caused by God, "as God's power is the life and soul of everything that exists;" and our soul is not matter, (but the divine power is) and strictly speaking, without him and his immediate agency, we cannot think.

If it should be said, that we can think without his *immediate* agency, and that only his *mediate* agency is necessary to our thinking; then I ask, what is the medium which the divine agency makes use of to the production of thought? Not anything in, or belonging to matter, surely; for that, according to the scheme now under consideration, consists of nothing but attraction and repulsion directed to and from certain indivisible centres or mathematical points. It will not be pretended that these points are the medium; for they are really nothing but the beginnings and bounds of the divine agency in attraction and repulsion. It will not be pretended that attraction or repulsion is the medium; for they are nothing but the immediate divine agency; and for the divine agency to produce thought, by the medium of the divine agency, is absurd. So it seems that all this cry about the materiality of the soul, and matter's thinking, comes to this merely, that God, by his immediate agency, produces thought where he commonly produces certain other effects, called attraction and repulsion, or motion to and from certain points or centres. And if this were ever so true, could this, with any propriety, be called matter's thinking? Or could it, from these premises, be inferred that the human soul is material?

It is manifest, however, that this scheme is aimed at something further than this. It is expressly declared, "that sensation and thought do *necessarily* result from the organization of the brain, when the powers of mere life are given to the system," p. 256. How to reconcile this with what was just now quoted from the same scheme, that everything and every action are the effect of the divine agency, and this as has just been shown, an immediate agency, I must leave others to inform us. Besides, that sensation and thought should necessarily result from the organization of the brain, when the powers of mere life are given to the system, is not reconcilable with what this same scheme holds concerning a person in a deep sleep, p. 271. It will not be pretended but that the brain of such a person is well organized, and the person himself is alive; and yet it is asserted that the soul of such a man ceases to think. So that on the premises of this scheme, thought does *not* necessarily or always result from the organization of the brain, when life is once given. It is said, that

"in all other cases we deem it sufficient to say, that certain circumstances are the causes and the necessary causes of certain appearances, if the appearances always accompany the circumstances," p. 258. But the appearances of thought and sensation do not, according to our adversaries' concessions, always accompany life, and the organization of the brain. Therefore, by their own concessions, sensation and thought do not necessarily result from the organization of the brain, and animal life.

It is said, p. 256, "that the whole man," (meaning both soul and body) "is of the same uniform composition;" and that man "is a homogeneous substance." But of what substance is man compounded? Matter, it is said, is a mere compages of mathematical points, the centres of attraction and repulsion. These points, then, are no substance at all. Nor are attraction and repulsion substance. Therefore if the whole man be compounded, or consist of matter, he is compounded of no substance at all, and is no substance, either homogeneous or heterogeneous. Again we are told "that substance is the unknown support of properties," p. 364. But the support of attraction and repulsion, which are acknowledged to be divine agencies, must be the Deity himself. Then it follows that the substance of matter is God himself; that the Deity is a material being or substance; and if the whole man consist of matter, he consists of the divine essence, and the Deity is the τὸ πᾶν, or the universe! Such are the consequences to which this scheme of the materiality of the human soul necessarily leads us!

2. It was proposed next to consider more directly some of the arguments by which it is attempted to be proved that the soul is material. These are principally the following:

(1) That reason and thought depend on the brain, because a person can exercise thought and reason as long as his brain is in a state of soundness, but never after it is destroyed. On this I observe, 1. That if it were ever so true that thought depends on the brain, still it may be the act of an immaterial substance. It will not be pretended that everything on which the exercise of thought and reason depends, is the soul. If it were so, we should prove that the trunk of the body, the heart, the lungs, the neck, etc., are the soul, because thought and reason, in our present state, depend on every one of these. 2. It is not true that a man can exercise thought and reason as long as his brain is in a state of soundness, if, as is held by the advocates for the materiality of the soul, he ceases to think in a deep sleep, or in a swoon. 3. As to the observation that thought ceases when the brain is destroyed, this no more proves the brain to be the soul, than the

same argument would prove the trunk of the body, or any of its several vital parts to be the soul.

(2) Another argument to prove that the human soul is material, is, that the souls of brutes are material; and they appear to be analogous to human souls. But it is not granted that the souls of brutes are material. The argument to prove that they are so, is, that they cease, or are annihilated at death. But in reply to this I would observe, that if they are annihilated at death, this does not prove that they are material. God may annihilate a spirit as well as matter, or as well as he can make it. But that they are annihilated is not an agreed point, among either philosophers or divines.

(3) Another argument for the materiality of the soul, is, that it appears to grow and decay with the body; that when the body is in its infancy, the powers of the soul are, in correspondence to those of the body, feeble and imperfect; that as the body grows, they increase in strength, and as the body decays, they decay with it. The answer is, that all this may be consistently enough with the supposition of the immateriality of the soul. The connection between the body and the soul may be such as to produce these effects. Therefore they are no proof for, or against the immateriality of the soul. These are some of the principal arguments urged to prove that the soul is matter. The force of them I submit to the judgment of this learned audience.

Still it may be said that though thought is the immediate effect of the divine agency, and does not necessarily result from the organization of the brain and from animal life, yet God always produces thought in an organized brain, and never without it, just as he produces gravitation in all matter, and never without it; that thought is as much a property or effect of matter, as gravitation is; that this is sufficient to answer every purpose wished for by the advocates for the materiality of the soul; and that on this plan, we shall have thought as long as we have an organized brain and no longer. But to all this I answer, 1. That it is not true on the principles of the materialists themselves, that we have thought as long as we have an organized brain; for they hold that in a deep sleep and in a swoon, thought ceases. Yet in these cases, and especially in a deep sleep, it will not be pretended that the brain is disorganized. 2. To say that we never are the subjects of thought, any longer than the brain remains entire and properly organized, is to suppose that the soul dies with the body; which is a mere begging of the question. I shall now, as proposed,

3. Subjoin some positive considerations and arguments to prove

that the human soul is immaterial. Here let us first consider the only sense in which we have to prove that the soul is immaterial. This is the sense just now explained, under the last objection. I mean this, that it is not true that when the human body, and particularly when the brain is destroyed and disorganized, the soul also is destroyed and ceases to think; or that God no longer continues the thinking of the individual, than he continues his body in life, and his brain in its proper organization. For as to the scheme that matter thinks by its own power, and that thought necessarily, and without the immediate agency of the Deity, results from matter however organized; either it is expressly given up by the modern advocates for the materiality of the soul, or it abundantly contradicts other principles which they, as well as other philosophers, expressly hold. This I conceive clearly appears from what has been already said in this discourse. It is granted by our opponents that everything is the effect of the divine power; that every action is the effect of God's action; and that his power is the life and soul of everything that exists. Therefore the only question remaining to be discussed is, that just stated, whether thought may and does exist, or whether God may and does continue human thought after the death of the body. As to this I observe,

(1) That God may, or has power to continue thought under these circumstances, seems impossible to be denied by any one. It is granted by those whom I now oppose, that everything and every action in creation are the immediate effects of the divine power and energy. This therefore is true concerning thought in particular. Thought, then, is the immediate effect of the divine power, and is not brought into existence by the medium of matter, or anything in or pertaining to it; neither matter, nor any of its properties help at all towards its production. Therefore it is just as easy for God to produce it without matter, as in connection with it; and of course he may continue thought after the death of the body. This is plain apart from all that is said in the scriptures. Some, however, who oppose the immateriality of the soul, profess a belief in the scriptures. With them, then, it is pertinent to argue from the scriptures; from what God, who is able to continue the thinking principle after death, has assured us he will do. I observe, then,

(2) That the scriptures afford us light in this case. This will appear from several passages. The first that I shall adduce is 2 Cor. 12: 2—4, "I knew a man in Christ, about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to

the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;) how he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Now it is plain that this man had perception and thought; for he was conscious that he was caught up to the third heaven and to paradise, and there heard unspeakable words. But the apostle did not know whether he was in the body, or out of it. Therefore it was clearly his opinion that a man might be conscious, and perceive, and think, out of the body. To the same purpose is chapter 5: 6, 8, 9, of the same epistle. "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." These words inform us that the apostle and his fellow christians of that day, were willing to be absent from the body and present with the Lord; and that they made it the great object of their labor, that whether present or absent they might be accepted of him; which clearly shows their belief that they might be absent from the body, and yet consciously present with the Lord. This text also further informs us, that they were confident this would be the case with them; that when they should leave the body, it would be to go and be present with the Lord.

Acts 7: 59, "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." If Stephen had believed that there was no intermediate or separate state, he would doubtless have expressed himself very differently. He would have said, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit and body, or my body and brain at the general resurrection." Matt. 10: 28, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." What can be plainer than that these words imply that the soul will survive the body? Nothing can be more manifest than that this is their meaning, unless we should take the absurd sense of the scheme of our opponents, that we are to fear him who is able to destroy both brain and body in hell! Heb. 12: 22, 23, "But ye are come to—the spirits of just men made perfect." Lest it should be said that these spirits of the just made perfect, mean the saints in the resurrection state, we may observe, that the scriptures have explained their idea of spirits very clearly. John 4: 24, "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." It is granted on all hands, that God is an immaterial being, and he is here declared

to be a spirit. By "a spirit," therefore, the scriptures mean an immaterial being. Again, Luke 24: 37, 39, "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them—behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." This is a further illustration of the scriptural idea of a spirit, and is a demonstration that that idea is not reconcilable with the doctrines of materialism.

Another text bearing on the main question before us, is Acts 1: 25, "From which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." This implies that Judas was in a state of sensibility after the death of his body, and therefore that his soul was not a part or the whole of his body which at death becomes insensible. If it should be said that his own place meant the grave, the answer is that this was no more his own proper place, than it was the place of the most sincere christian; for all, both good and bad, go to it. 2 Pet. 1: 13, 14, "Yea, I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." If the soul of the apostle was his brain, there is no truth in this representation. His brain was not about to be separated from the rest of his body, and to live and be in a state of sensibility after the rest of his body was dead; but his brain died whenever his body died, as is granted by those who hold the materiality of the soul. Yet the apostle declares, that he knew he must shortly put off this tabernacle, that is, be separated from his body, and that the Lord had shown it to him. 1 Thess. 5: 9, 10, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." I need not inform you, that the expressions "waking" and "sleeping" are very commonly used in the scriptures to signify bodily life and death. Nor does it appear that this passage will bear any other construction. If it will not, it is a clear and direct declaration, that whether the bodies of true christians after death be alive or dead, their souls shall be alive and with Christ.

Phil. 1: 21—23, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor; yet what I shall choose, I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." For the apostle to die, could be gain on no other ground, than this was to be in a state of sensibility and happiness immediately after death. On the supposition that his soul died with his body,

and was to be revived with it at the resurrection, what gain could he secure by dying at that time, more than if he should have lived many years longer? In either case, he would, by the promises, be entitled to eternal glory in the resurrection state. By dying at the time he wrote, he would lose all that happiness which he might enjoy in spiritual exercises, in communion with God and with Christ, in being the instrument of the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, in building up the kingdom of Christ in the world, and in any temporal blessings, improved by divine grace. Therefore, if he had died at that time, he would have been a loser instead of a gainer. Nor is this all. By continuing in life, he would have made further proficiency in the christian course, and done more for the honor of God and the kingdom of Christ, and therefore would have been entitled, by promise, to a greater degree of happiness in the resurrection state; and his happiness, in that state, would have been the greater to all eternity. So that in reality the apostle would have been an infinite loser by death at that time. He would have left a certain degree of happiness, possibly equal in degree to the whole heavenly happiness of some saints. And this degree of happiness running on through eternity, would be a sum of happiness as truly infinite, as the whole eternal happiness of some real saints. As, therefore, these saints, by the loss of their whole heavenly happiness, would sustain an infinite loss, so would the apostle, if he had lost that additional degree of happiness, to which he would have been entitled by his continued life and usefulness. Thus we can make nothing of this text, but upon the supposition that his soul did not die with his body, as it must have done, if it was his brain, or any part of his physical system.

1 Pet. 3: 19, 20, "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." Now unless we allow the soul to exist after the death of the body, in what sense could the spirits of the survivers of the old world, be said to be in prison? Their spirits could no more be in prison than their bodies. Nor could they, on that supposition, be properly called *spirits*. They would have been called, as they would have *been*, *bodies* wholly. But the scriptures everywhere represent *spirits* to be different from *bodies*, as we have already seen.

Eccl. 12: 7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." How can this be reconciled with the doctrine that the soul is matter, and dies with the body? If it be matter, it is dust as well as

the body, and therefore must return to the earth as it was." But it is expressly said that while the dust, or the body returns to the earth, the spirit returns unto God; and therefore the latter must exist in a state of separation from the former. Besides, the soul is called the *spirit*, which always in scripture is distinguished, as it is in this very passage, from the body, or the dust. Therefore we have a right to believe it to be distinct. If, as is pretended, the human soul is the brain, then it seems that the brain is not dust, as the rest of the body is; which it is presumed our adversaries in this cause will not pretend. Let us read this text, with the word brain instead of spirit, which it is certainly right and proper to do, if the spirit be the brain; and then it will run thus: "The dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the brain shall return unto God who gave it!" The bare repetition of the passage in this form, shows the absurdity of such a construction, and of the doctrine which could lead to it.

Luke 23: 43, "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." This could not be true, if the soul of this thief on the cross was material, and died with his body. If it should be said that the meaning is, that as the thief would be conscious of nothing between death and the resurrection, his being with Christ, in the resurrection state, would seem to him to be on the same day and immediately; I answer: This would be to talk unintelligibly, without reason and without example. Would it not be unintelligible and unreasonable to tell a man who had been the whole day in a deep sleep, and who was wholly ignorant of the time that had passed during his sleep, that it was but an hour or a moment since he had fallen into sleep? Or would there be any propriety or truth in saying, that Lazarus, who lay dead four days, was raised on the same day, and even immediately after his death? Yet this would have been just as true and proper, on the ground of this objection as our Lord's telling the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Luke 16: 22, 23, "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torments," etc. This parable is a plain representation that Abraham and Lazarus and the rich man, were all in a state of existence and sensibility between death and the resurrection, and while the brethren of this rich man were still in this life. Therefore their souls were not material, and did not die with their bodies. I know it is said, that this is a parabolical representation. I grant it. But parabolical representations are designed to

teach truth and not falsehood. Now unless this parable does teach direct falsehood, the souls of Abraham, Lazarus and the rich man, were in existence and sensibility, in a state of separation from their bodies; and by parity of reasoning, this is true of all mankind.

Several representations in the book of the Revelation, teach us that the dead, and especially the dead saints are in a state of sensibility between death and the resurrection. Chap. 5: 9, 10, "And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." The persons here speaking were saints redeemed from among men. The place in which they were seen and heard by the apostle to sing this song, was heaven, as is manifest by the preceding context, and by other passages. And the time was manifestly before the resurrection, because it is said, "We shall reign on the earth;" and these words, whether we believe the reign of the saints on earth to be immediately before or after the resurrection, prove that the time at which they were spoken was before it. It is also manifest, from the text with its context, that the time of singing this song, was at the time of the Lamb's taking the book sealed with the seals, and previous to the opening of them, that is, previous to the great events and dispensations of providence concerning the christian church.

Rev. 6: 9, 10, "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the *souls* of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" On these words we may observe, that the apostle here had a vision of the souls of the martyred saints, pleading for vengeance. But on the supposition that the souls of men are a part of their bodies, and die and perish with them, their souls could no more plead for vengeance than any other part of their bodies; their brain no more their hands or their feet. Again, on the supposition that the souls of men are their brains, in strict propriety it ought to have been said; And I saw under the altar the *brains* of them that were slain, etc. And if the brain be the soul, how has it come to pass that the scriptures, neither here nor in any other passage, call the soul by its literal and proper name, but always speak of it by a figurative and improper one?

Rev. 7: 13—15, "And one of the elders answered, saying un-

to me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple." That this is a representation of what was to take place before the resurrection, is manifest from this, that it was under the sixth seal, and before the opening of the seventh; and that the events of the seventh will be accomplished before the resurrection. But in this scene taking place, thus before the resurrection, the inspired apostle saw those who had come out of great tribulation, and who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb, standing before the throne of God, and serving him day and night in his temple. And this most plainly implies both existence and sensibility. And so in chap. 14: 13, "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." These blessed persons were the *dead*, and not those who are raised from the dead; for these last are spoken of as *alive*. And they, dead as they are, are said to rest from their labors, and their works to follow them; that is, the effects of their works follow them, in that they receive the reward of them. But this could not be truly said of them, if they were in a state of insensibility, and were dead both as to soul and body. Several other passages in this book, seem to hold forth the same important truth; but these may be sufficient for our argument.

Thus far I have, so far as relates to infidels, argued the immortality of the soul and a future state of existence, from the soul's immateriality. I now proceed, as proposed,

II. *To argue the same thing from several moral considerations.*

1. Unless there were a future state of rewards and punishments, it would not appear that God is a holy God, a friend to virtue and an enemy to vice. God can by no other means clearly appear to be a friend to virtue and an enemy to vice, than by *acting the part* of a friend to the former, and an enemy to the latter; or by discovering, in his treatment of the virtuous and the vicious, an approbation of the former and a disapprobation of the latter. But he is a friend to virtue and an enemy to vice. This is granted by infidels themselves. Therefore he will show this character, and will on the whole appear as he really is. Therefore he will treat both the virtuous and the vicious so as to show

his approbation of the former, and his disapprobation of the latter. And such treatment as this, is rewarding and punishing; it is to befriend, uphold, protect and reward the virtuous, and to punish the wicked. If God should not thus show his approbation of virtue, and disapprobation of vice, he would not appear in his true character; he would not finally appear to be such a being as he really is. And this his final neglect to act out his real character in the view of his intelligent creatures, would be unaccountable, and irreconcilable with his character or nature itself. But he does not, in this life, thus act out his character; and therefore we infer that there will be a future state, in which he will act it out. To this reasoning, however, several objections are made which require an answer.

(1) It is objected that we do not know but that virtue is properly and fully rewarded in this life; that many whom we judge to be happy are miserable; that perhaps those vicious men whom we judge to be most happy are extremely miserable, and those virtuous men whom we judge to be miserable are happy; and that thus the former are properly punished, and the latter fully rewarded. To this I answer: This objection supposes that it is impossible for us to know who are happy and who are miserable. If so, it is impossible that God should ever so reward the virtuous and punish the vicious that mankind shall know it; it is impossible that he should ever do it visibly and convincingly to mankind. If so, God cannot manifest himself to mankind as a friend to virtue and an enemy to vice; for they can see his true character no otherwise than by seeing him reward the virtuous and punish the wicked; and this implies that they see, or are convinced of the happiness which he communicates to the former, and of the misery which he inflicts on the latter. If it were indeed true, as this objection implies, that we cannot know by external appearances, when our fellow-creatures are happy and when they are miserable, then we cannot know that they are either happy or miserable in a future state. And though in the state of the damned, they should *appear* to be exquisitely tormented, they might *in reality*, be superlatively happy. So that on the ground of this objection there would be no foundation for complaining, or for being at all terrified in the prospect of hell, and all the apparent torments of that world of suffering. If it should be said that the scriptures assure us that some are miserable in hell, so they assure us that some are miserable in this life; that those who are finally saved will have come out of great tribulation, and that the best of christians shall on earth be more or less subject to trial. On the ground of this objection, though the

virtuous and vicious are *really* rewarded and punished in this life, yet neither rewards nor punishments are *visible*. But the honor of God and the vindication of his character as a friend to virtue and an enemy to vice, require that sooner or later they be *visibly* rewarded and punished, so that men in general shall see and know it. What should we think, and what should we have a right to think of the Deity, if he always appeared to treat the virtuous and the vicious in the same manner, or without any proper discrimination? If God do really and properly distribute rewards and punishments in this life, why does he conceal this proceeding, when the vindication of his own character, and the relief of his most dutiful children from their anxiety for his honor, require that it should not be concealed, but openly manifested?

(2) Another objection to the foregoing reasoning is, That virtue is its own reward, and naturally and necessarily tends to happiness while it is practised; and that vice, in the same manner, naturally punishes itself; so that there is no need of a future state of rewards and punishments. To this it may be answered, that so far as virtue, by its own native tendency to happiness, rewards itself, and vice, by its own native tendency to misery, punishes itself, God does not reward the one or punish the other. For this same reward would attend virtue if God were an enemy to it, provided he did not interpose positively to prevent the native effect of it; and the same punishment would attend vice, even if God were a friend to that, provided he did not prevent the effect of it. This reward of virtue, then, is no token of his approbation of it; nor is this punishment of vice any token of his disapprobation. By this reward and this punishment, we should never know that God is a friend to virtue and an enemy to vice. Besides, it is not true that virtue carries its own full reward with it. It will not be pretended that the perfect virtue and holiness of our Lord Jesus Christ was fully rewarded in this life. And so with regard to the virtue of Paul, and the other apostles, and the prophets and holy men of old in other ages of the world.

(3) Another objection is, that if there be a future state, it need not be an immortal state; that virtue may be sufficiently rewarded, and vice sufficiently punished in a limited time. So that if it should be allowed that the argument from the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in this life, proves the future existence of the soul, it does not prove its immortality. To this it is answered, that of what the proper reward of virtue is, we may be very inadequate judges. Whatever the reward is, it is a reward of grace and not of debt, because the virtue of the best man is imperfect, and therefore he, on the footing of law and jus-

tice deserves no reward. But God means to show his own infinite grace in the reward of an imperfect creature; and that a reward sufficient for this, may be bestowed in a limited time, does not appear. That a reward equal and superior to *the merit of the creature*, may be bestowed in a limited time is granted; for, in fact, he has no merit at all. But that a reward expressive of the infinite grace and goodness and bounty of God can be received and enjoyed by a finite creature, in a limited time, does not appear; and whether it do not appear to be an impossibility, that such a reward should, in such a time, be enjoyed by a finite creature, I submit to the decision of any person of candor and judgment. And whether the punishment expressive of the divine infinite abhorrence of sin, do not require an equal time as that which is expressive of the infinite love and goodness of God, I submit to the same decision.

If there be indeed a future state of reward and happiness to the righteous, but a limited one, then the best of men must be rendered miserable by the prospect that their happiness, however entire without that prospect, must come to an end, and that they themselves must cease to exist. On the other hand the worst of men must be greatly comforted by the prospect that their misery, however great, will also come to an end. Besides, what end can be answered by the annihilation of either the righteous or the wicked, after they shall have been fully rewarded and punished? What if the righteous have been rewarded sufficiently to show God's approbation of their virtue, and his own grace and goodness? Why may they not yet be permitted to exist, and enjoy further good? Would not the same infinite goodness, which at first gave them existence and afterwards made them happy, be disposed still to permit them to enjoy the same existence and happiness? What good to God or the universe, can we imagine would result from their annihilation? On the other hand, what good can it be to God or the universe, to annihilate those who have, by their own sufferings, satisfied for their own sins? To annihilate them, must be, it would seem, a further punishment of them, which, from the nature of the case, must be an unjust punishment, as they are supposed to have suffered already, all that justice requires. And these considerations are worthy of notice on the supposition, that the virtuous and vicious are fully rewarded and punished in this life. If they be thus rewarded, why should they be annihilated at death? The loss of existence, and of all that happiness which they might enjoy throughout eternity, is certainly a very great evil. Why should they be made to suffer this evil? The virtuous might certainly be supposed to escape this

evil as a punishment, on the same ground that they escaped the punishment which the wicked are supposed to have suffered in this life. And the wicked having, by the supposition, suffered the full punishment of their sins in this life, do not deserve any further punishment, nor can they consistently with justice, be made to suffer any; and to suppose annihilation brought on them as a punishment, would be to impeach the divine justice. If it should be said that annihilation is brought on both the righteous and the wicked, not as a punishment; I answer, still it must be brought on them for some good end, and must somehow be subservient to the general good; otherwise we shall impeach both the wisdom and goodness of God. And it is incumbent on the advocates for annihilation to point out some good end to be obtained by it, and some end subservient to the divine glory and the general good. Until this is done, we have no reason to say —nay, it would be unreasonable to say—that the annihilation of all mankind will take place at death, or at any future period whatever.

2. Another argument for a future state, is, that without such a state it does not appear that the world was made for any very valuable end. As the Deity is possessed of infinite perfection, of infinite wisdom and goodness, doubtless all his works are designed to answer some most valuable and important end. But if there be not a future state, the creation of this world and of the human race, does not appear to answer any such end. For what end shall we suppose the world was created? For the happiness of mankind? This is certainly very imperfectly obtained in the present state. If then, that was the end of the creation of the world and of the human race, why is not the race made perfectly happy, or at least as happy as possible? If we believe that the happiness of mankind is the end of creation, and that God seeks this end in a lower degree than it may be obtained, we impeach his goodness. If he seek this end in as high a degree as possible, and yet obtain it to a lower degree than is possible, this supposition impeaches his power or wisdom.

Or shall we suppose that God made the world and mankind, for the display of his own glory? The display of the divine glory, is the display of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. And to display these perfections, is to produce a system of intelligent creatures, to the highest possible degree excellent and happy. But it is manifest that mankind are not, in the present state, to the highest possible degree excellent and happy. It is in vain to say that if God had chosen, he could not have kept out at least some of the diseases, pains, mortifications, disappointments and

other calamities that mankind suffer in the present state. To say that God has glorified himself in the creation of the human race, because in the present state men enjoy more happiness than they suffer misery, will not relieve the difficulty. In the first place it is a matter of great dispute, and one that has never yet been settled, whether the happiness of mankind in their present state, does or does not exceed their misery. But let us allow for the present that it exceeds it. Still why is any misery sent upon them which it was in the power of the Deity to prevent? How is this consistent with the infinite goodness of God, and with his aiming at the happiness of mankind in their creation, or at the display of his glory, especially of his infinite goodness? Is it a sufficient vindication of the goodness of a father, to say that he does his children good, more often than he does them harm; or of any man, to say that he pays his debts, or bestows his charity more often than he robs or steals? No! it is a stain on the character of any parent, that he inflicts pain on his child, *in any instance*, unless it be necessary to a more important good; and on the character of any man, that he has been *once* guilty of theft or robbery. How, then, can we vindicate the character of God, and make it out that the happiness of mankind was the end of their creation, on any other ground than that the evils of this life are to be overruled for good to them in a future state? Or how shall we make it out that these evils are subservient to the clear manifestation of the divine power, wisdom and goodness, unless this is made manifest in a future state? Or if it be said that the evils of this life are not to be overruled to the good of mankind in a future state, because there is no such state; but they are to be overruled to the good of some other order or orders of beings, and so to the good of the whole; this is to admit that mankind may be made to suffer evil in order to promote the general good. If so, how do we, or can we know but that they are to suffer evil, *in the future world*, for the same end? But this will open a door by which to introduce the doctrine of the eternity of hell-torments, which it is presumed the advocates of the mortality of the human soul would be very unwilling to open. For, once allow that mankind were made, not for the end of their own happiness, but to promote the happiness of others by their sufferings, and it will be difficult, if not impossible to prove that they may not promote the happiness of others by their endless as well as by their temporary sufferings.

Nor is this all. It is further to be observed with respect to this matter, that if it were ever so true that men were made not for their own sakes, but for some higher order or orders of beings,

still they are moral agents, capable of moral government, and actually do practise either virtue or vice. Therefore God, as the supreme moral governor, and the patron of virtue and opposer of vice, must take suitable notice of the conduct of these moral agents, and must reward and punish them according to their respective characters. So that the plea that men were not made for their own happiness, does not at all weaken the argument from the moral government of God in favor of a future state.

3. I shall mention but one more argument for a future state. It is this. If the eternal existence and happiness of mankind, as a race of beings, be more subservient to the general happiness of the universe, than their annihilation at death, then the infinite goodness of God will doubtless choose and secure them eternal existence and happiness. Infinite goodness seeks the good and happiness of intelligent beings in general, and will consent to the misery or annihilation of any, on no other condition than that their misery or loss is necessary to the greater good and happiness of the whole. Therefore as the annihilation of all mankind at death implies the entire loss of all that good and happiness which they do enjoy in life, and might enjoy to all eternity, we may be sure that infinite goodness and a God of infinite goodness would never consent to it, unless it were absolutely necessary to the greater happiness of the whole system of intelligent beings. But their annihilation does not appear to be necessary or subservient to the greater good of the system. In what respect would the rest of the system be rendered more happy by it? It is, I confess, impossible for me to conceive but that the rest of the system might be just as happy, though mankind should eternally exist and be happy, as they would be if mankind were annihilated. Nay, as benevolence rejoices in the happiness of others, and is rendered more happy by their happiness, and as all innocent intelligences are entirely benevolent, therefore we may safely conclude, that unless some special reason be assigned to show the contrary, that all innocent and well disposed intelligences will be rendered more happy by the eternal existence and happiness of mankind as a race of beings, than they would be by their annihilation at death; and therefore that the infinitely good God will secure their eternal existence and happiness.

If it should be said that this argument proves the final *happiness*, as well as *existence* of all mankind; I observe that it undoubtedly does, unless we have evidence that the exclusion of some of them from happiness is required by the greatest happiness of the system, or by the divine glory, as we certainly have by divine revelation; and if we had the same evidence that the an-

hilation of all the race would be subservient to the good of the intellectual universe, we should doubtless have reason to believe that all men would be annihilated.

I have thus exhibited what appears to me the principal evidence, from the light of nature, of a future state of existence, and of the immortality of the human soul. This evidence may be briefly summed up thus: The soul is a spirit, an immaterial substance, and therefore naturally incorruptible, immortal, capable of existence and thought, and according to abundant scriptural declarations, actually enjoying them both, when the body is dead. Man is a rational creature, capable of virtue and vice, and actually practising either the one or the other, and therefore accountable to God; and God, as a friend to virtue and an enemy to vice must reward the former and punish the latter; and as this is not done in this life, it must be in a future state. The human race, no doubt, were made for some important end, either their own happiness or the divine glory. But neither of these ends appears to be in this life obtained in a degree at all correspondent to the divine goodness, power, and wisdom. Therefore there is a future state in which one or the other, or both will be properly obtained. And lastly, we have reason from the goodness of God to suppose that mankind will exist in a future state and there be happy, (since goodness and especially infinite goodness delights in the existence and happiness of intelligent beings), unless their existence or happiness be inconsistent with the greater happiness of some other being or beings; and there is no reason to believe that the existence of all men, and the happiness of the virtuous in a future state, are at all inconsistent with the happiness of any other being or beings.

I grant that all this depends on the moral perfections of God. But these are generally granted by deists. And if God be not a friend to virtue, he will not be disposed to reward it or to punish vice; but on the other hand he may be disposed eternally to punish virtue and reward vice, or he may be disposed to punish both alike. He may be disposed to give all men a future existence, to gratify his own malevolence in their endless misery. So that the advocates of annihilation will obtain no advantage to their cause by the denial of God's moral perfections.

Such is a brief summary of the evidence of the soul's immortality and of a future state of rewards and punishments. The inferences which might naturally be drawn from this important subject are many and of much moment. But as this discourse has already been so protracted, I shall only glance at two.

1. If there be a future state of rewards and punishments, and

this be evident even from the light of nature, then let not infidels deceive themselves in reference to this subject. Let them not flatter themselves that they are never to be called to an account for their conduct, but are to be like the beasts that perish. Let them not foolishly say, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Let them not fondly embrace infidelity, with the idea that it reasonably relieves them from all fear of a future state, and of the punishment to be inflicted in it. That state *is* a reality. *They are to exist forever.* And if unreconciled to God through Christ, his wrath must be their only portion.

2. Since there is a future state, how diligent ought christians to be, to live in a manner corresponding to their hopes. "Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, we according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless." And "now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

SERMON XX.

FALSE REFUGES UNSAFE.*

.IAH 28: 17.—*And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.*

IT is supposed that our text, with the context, had a primary ference to the political state of the Jews at the time when it is written. They were at that time threatened by the Assyri- and Chaldeans; and to secure themselves from immediate nger they made a feigned submission to their invading foes. this it is supposed the prophet refers in the fifteenth verse. We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, shall not come unto us, for we have made lies our refuge and der falsehood have we hid ourselves." By making a pretend- submission, and entering into a treaty of peace with their ene- es, which they themselves intended to break, they made lies ir refuge, and hid themselves from impending danger under ehood. And by this deceitful transaction they imagined them- ves to be as safe from death and slaughter, as if they had made ovenant with death, and an agreement with hell or the grave. d though the overflowing scourge of the Assyrians and Chal- ans should pass through all the adjacent countries, they flat- ed themselves that it should not come unto them.

Others, however, suppose that the covenant with death, and agreement with hell, refer to an alliance which the Jews had tered into with Egypt. The Egyptians were a very powerful tion, and the Jews certainly did, about this time, form an alli- ce with them for their defence against the Assyrians or Chal- ans. In consequence of this alliance they supposed themselves safe from their enemies, and from death by their hands, as if y were in alliance with death and the grave. At the same e that they entered into this covenant with Egypt, they might ubtless have made many false pretensions of obedience or ndship for the Chaldeans. This they might deem an additional

* First preached in 1779.

ground of safety; so that they would account themselves entirely secure from the overflowing scourge of the Chaldean army, both because they were in alliance with Egypt, and because they had made lies their refuge.

God, however, tells them that in all their confidence, they should be terribly disappointed. He tells them that he had laid in Zion a sure and safe foundation of confidence in all times of danger, and that every one that should seek safety in that, should never seek in vain. "Behold," he says, "I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation. He that believeth shall not make haste." At the same time he informs them that he will execute strict judgment on all who do not trust in this foundation; and that their perjured submission to the Chaldeans, or their alliance with Egypt should not save them in the day of his wrath. "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it."

But however these things might have been written with an immediate reference to the Jews, and to the events of their day, doubtless the chief design of the Holy Spirit was to teach them and us spiritual and evangelical truth. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost in that state of the church, to teach the most interesting truths of the gospel by outward types and shadows—by war and peace, danger and safety, success and victory, defeat and desolation. Thus our text and context are full of instruction to us, who live under the gospel, with respect to our spiritual concerns. Sinners in these days are exceedingly apt to neglect the plain and sure way of the gospel salvation, and to place their dependence for justification, either in the sight of God or to their own consciences, or both, on something quite as false and delusory as that to which the Jews trusted. They make a refuge of lies; they betake themselves to vain and insufficient hiding places which cannot save them from the overflowing scourge of divine wrath.

Our present subject therefore shall be *to point out and expose some of the refuges of lies of gospel sinners.*

By refuges of lies of gospel sinners, I mean not only all false grounds of confidence as to acceptance with God, but all false

retences on which they justify themselves, at least in some measure in their own minds; stifle the just accusations of their own onsciences, and quiet the fears which both scripture and reason end to excite. These are many. I shall attempt to notice only few of them.

I. *They often make a refuge of their ignorance.*

When the system of the gospel in general, or any particular octrine is proposed to them, and they are urged to receive it, ney plead that they know not whether it be the truth or not. They ay that there is much dispute in the world about religion and its octrines; that great and wise men have differed, some asserting nd others denying the same things; and which are in the right ney know not; they have never given themselves the trouble to nquire much into such matters. All this they own, as if it were a neritorious instance of virtue; and add, perhaps, that they think would ill become them to undertake to determine points conerning which even the greatest and best men have not been greed. Thus they shield themselves in their ignorance against ne charge of unbelief, and the claims of truth and duty.

Let us attend to an example or two of this nature. If the octrine of original and total depravity be urged upon them; or ne nature and necessity of regeneration; or that the law of God perfect in goodness and glory, and therefore of full and eternal bligation; or that salvation is to be obtained only through Christ; r if any duty be inculcated or pressed upon them, as that it is ow time to exercise the spirit and begin the practice of religion; hat it is their immediate and indispensable duty to repent and eturn to the ways of obedience; to believe on the Lord Jesus hrist; to become reconciled to God, so as to love him sincerely nd supremely, at once they plead their ignorance. They know ot, they say, whether these doctrines be really true, and therefore they cannot at present receive them; they know not whether he exercises enjoined on them as duties be really duties or not, nd therefore they must for the present be excused from their erformance.

Now this ignorance is altogether voluntary, as they who plead generally take no proper pains to remove it by obtaining right nformation, so that they may be fully and reasonably satisfied. If ney do not, at present, know whether these things are true or ot, yet they might have known, or may know now if they will ut use the means of information which they have in their hands. ut they choose not to use them, nor to obtain the knowledge hich they would afford; they choose to remain in their ignorance, nd that for these reasons:

1. Because the knowledge of the truth and duties of the gospel *is very disagreeable and painful* to men in their carnal and sinful state. These truths and duties are to them even disagreeable objects of attention and contemplation. They are not suited to their taste, but are directly opposed to it. They promise them so long as they remain of their present characters, no good, either in this life or the future; but condemn them to eternal and insupportable wo. They do not justify the temper and practice of sinners, but entirely disapprove and condemn both. Now being thus disagreeable to carnal men, it is no wonder they do not attend to them so far as is necessary to the understanding and knowledge of them. Men are, in any case, with difficulty induced to attend to disagreeable objects, and to seek after that which they believe will be a source of pain if they should find it. But the things that engross the attention, such as the pleasures, amusements, profits and honors of this world, are very agreeable to their taste; they love them, and view them as matters of great importance. No wonder then that these occupy their minds, and exclude that attention to the things before mentioned which is necessary to the proper knowledge of them.

2. Ignorance and a disbelief of the truth *quiet the consciences* of sinners and prevent fear. If sinners really believed that they are by nature totally depraved, and that they are still under the influence of that depravity, they would fear the consequences. If they believed in the necessity of regeneration, they would tremble for themselves while unregenerate. If they believed in the necessity of an interest in Christ in order to salvation, they would of course be alarmed till they should have found that interest in him. But so long as they are ignorant of these things, they are not troubled with the accusations of conscience in these particulars, nor with any fearful expectations of that wrath which shall devour the guilty. And just so with respect to the duties of christianity. If they believed that they were bound to an immediate compliance with the gospel—at once to repent and believe on Christ, conscience which is God's faithful monitor, would accuse them for their neglect, and sting them with many self reproaches. But so long as they are ignorant of their duty, in these or any other particulars, they feel no uneasiness, but are satisfied with themselves and their conduct.

3. The plea of ignorance is of use *to sustain their reputation* in the view of others. If at any time it has been observed to them that they seem to be negligent of religion in general, of death and another world, or of any particular doctrines or duties of christianity, they at once plead that they do not think of these

things as others think, and therefore it need not be matter of wonder if they are not influenced by things that they do not believe. They do but act according to their sentiments. Thus they maintain a show of consistency, and on that account often boast and triumph in their ignorance, as if it were a glory to be consistently wrong.

This ignorance or unbelief is sometimes affected or pretended. They who plead it have strong apprehensions that the things which they pretend to disbelieve are true, if they do not actually believe them to be so. Yet they pretend the contrary in vindication of their wickedness. But in either case, whether this ignorance be real or pretended, it is but a refuge of lies, deceptive and insufficient to answer the purpose for which they betake themselves to it. It is most manifestly and literally so, when it is pretended; and even when it is real, inasmuch as it is voluntary, and might be removed by a careful and candid inquiry, it still remains a refuge of lies. What if ministers, and other wise and good men do differ? There is a ground of faith—of faith that is sure and safe; and until they have diligently studied God's truth, they surely have no right to complain that they cannot find this ground.

II. *Some make a refuge of their good works.*

By these they both quiet their consciences, and hope to obtain the divine favor. They are more or less moral and externally correct and regular in their conduct, and of this they make their refuge. Of such we may reckon three classes of men; those who generally lead a moral life; those who are moral in some respects, while in others they are grossly immoral; and those who attend on the external institutions of divine worship. And

1. Some in general *lead a moral life.* They are sober and temperate, just and true, kind and pacific, public spirited and charitable. Such men, with all their moral attainments, if unsanctified and unenlightened by at least the common influences of the Holy Spirit, universally depend on what they call their good works to render them acceptable in the sight of God. Being blind to their own faults, they see not so much of their own sins as they do of the sins of others. Being prepossessed in their own favor, as we all are by the influence of our natural pride and self-love, they magnify their own moral acts, and think them to be acts of real virtue and goodness. They shine in their own eyes and imagine they shine as much in the eyes of others, and even of God himself. In short, in the spirit of Haman they think, "whom will the Lord so much delight to honor" as themselves.

But this is a deceitful refuge—a mere refuge of lies. For in the first place it is wholly a false supposition that their works of

morality are really good works. They are no more than splendid sins. Arising from a wrong principle of heart, from mere self-love or some more depraved appetite, and being directed to a wrong end, they are wholly destitute of all true virtue, all real goodness. In them there is nothing of duty; and those who perform them, to say the most, are only God's best and most respectable enemies. Duty is the most amiable and excellent thing in the created universe; it is real goodness or true holiness. And he who truly performs any duty, is so far holy, as he who performs all his duty is complete in holiness.

Again, the persons of whom I am now speaking, fall into another grand mistake in this matter. It is this, that they suppose that works really good and virtuous can procure for them acceptance with God. This, however, is a very groundless imagination. If it were true, it would prove the atonement of Christ entirely needless. So that in both these respects, the most universal and correct morality is but a refuge of lies, when made either on the ground of quieting the conscience, or of securing the favor of God.

2. There are others, who are moral *only in parts of their conduct*, while in others they are grossly immoral, who yet depend for salvation on their morality even though it be such as it is. Scarcely any man is so immoral and abandoned but that he thinks his goodness is such, as in one way or another far overbalances his wickedness. The drunkard, the profane, the debauchee, will all plead their honesty, their justice, or their acts of generosity, and thank God perhaps that they are no hypocrites. Those which they reckon their most amiable virtues, they doubt not far overbalance their peculiar sins, and on the whole they scruple not to esteem themselves much better men than most others, and especially than many who make great professions of religion; and therefore suppose they are likely to obtain the eternal favor of God. The like plea is made by the unjust and fraudulent, and indeed by sinners of every description. What if they do injure or defraud their neighbor on some occasions? They are not guilty of these crimes as often as they themselves suffer in such things from others. So that they are not worse, but much better than many other men. And what if they do not always observe the golden rule of doing to others as they would wish that they should do to them? At least they observe the rule which they seem to think sufficient of doing to others as others actually do to themselves. Therefore though they may not obtain the first place among good men, they persuade themselves that they shall not be seated lower than the second. That this is a refuge of lies is self-evident.

3. There are also those who attend *on the outward ordinances* of worship, who in like manner depend on this as the other characters mentioned do on their morality. But this also is a refuge of lies. There is no more goodness in the bare outward attendance on ordinances and the means of grace, than there is in a bare outward morality. The one can no more recommend to the favor of God than the other. The great test of acceptance with him is, doing his will from the heart; and anything that comes short of this is no evidence of such acceptance. But even if there were a real good in attending on ordinances, still this could not satisfy for sin, or in the least appease the wrath of God. There is, therefore, no dependence to be placed on this as a refuge. It is but a refuge of lies.

III. *Some make a refuge of the absolute goodness and grace of God.*

They have heard that God is good; that he is infinite in goodness; that he delights not in the death of the wicked, but chooses rather that they should turn and live; that mercy is his darling attribute, (as it has been, though improperly, expressed by some) and that judgment is his strange work. These considerations afford them comfort, quiet their fears, soothe their consciences, and are the ground of their hope and even confident expectation of salvation. But they are no more than a refuge of lies, and that in two respects.

1. Impenitent sinners do but *deceive themselves* in imagining that they are really *desirous* of being saved by the infinite *mercy* and *grace* of God. They have no proper idea of grace in the case, nor of their need of it. Grace can be exercised to the ill-deserving only. There is no grace in pardoning a person who has been guilty of no crime. Suppose a man arraigned at a human tribunal on the charge of murder, but that upon full inquiry it appears that he is entirely innocent of the crime. The judge in this case is bound *in justice* to discharge him, and in discharging him performs no act of grace at all. Further, the man must deserve the very punishment from which he is delivered, or else there is no grace in his deliverance. There is no grace in pardoning a man who is condemned to the gallows while he deserves only the punishment of a small pecuniary fine. And so there is no grace in saving sinners from hell unless they actually deserve the eternal torments of that world of misery.

But impenitent sinners in general who are hoping to be saved by the absolute goodness and grace of God, have no proper idea that they are, in this sense, and to this degree, ill-deserving. For the truth of this assertion, I appeal to those who imagine they

are trusting in the infinite goodness and grace of God for salvation, and ask whether they really admit and believe that they deserve the torments of hell, and that those torments might be inflicted upon them with the most perfect justice? If not, then of course they must think they ought to be saved from those torments on the footing of justice; that to save them from them would be no more than an act of justice, or than what they deserve; and that if they are not saved, but sent to them, they will be very hardly treated. Of course, as they suppose that God will not deal hardly or unjustly with them, all their expectations of salvation are not at all on the footing of grace, but wholly on the footing of justice. And in truth to be saved by grace is not the object of their desire; they disdain the very offer and idea of it. Therefore in future let them not plead the infinite mercy and grace of God, nor amuse themselves with the expectation of salvation on that footing; for this is not what they desire or wish for, nor can it be, till they are truly convinced of sin and of their infinite ill-desert on account of it.

2. The expectation of salvation because God is of infinite goodness and grace, is entirely groundless and delusive *unless sinners comply with the terms* on which grace and salvation are offered. It is indeed true that God is gracious, infinitely gracious. Yet he does not, nor ever will exercise pardoning and saving grace to all mankind. We are told that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." As some will at last enter into "life eternal," so others "shall go away into everlasting punishment." And none are saved but those who are interested in the promises of grace and salvation. These promises are to men of certain particular characters, and on certain conditions, such as faith, repentance, holiness, reconciliation to God, etc. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha." Therefore even the amiable and glorious divine perfections of infinite goodness and grace, are perverted to a refuge of lies by all those of you who expect to be saved by those perfections, without a compliance with the terms of the gospel on which only salvation is offered. And to hope to be saved in a compliance with these terms, is not to hope for it on the footing of God's absolute goodness and grace, but on the footing of the conditional promises of the gospel.

IV. *Many sinners make a refuge of their own inability.*

On this ground they excuse themselves from almost every duty, particularly from the great duties of repentance and faith and reconciliation to God. Their plea is that they are poor, lost, depraved creatures; that they are so blinded by their original corruption that they cannot even see their duty; that they are so weak and feeble that they can do nothing in religion; and particularly that they cannot comply with the gospel, so as to be entitled to its promises. This is their perpetual refuge; and whenever any duty, and especially a compliance with the gospel is pressed upon them, they immediately fly to it. With it they quiet their consciences in their neglect and indifference—looking upon themselves as, in reality, perfectly excusable, and of course, if consistent, supposing that they are and shall be actually excused in the sight of God. But if this refuge—this strong hold of sinners be examined, I presume it will be found to be entirely false and delusory—a mere refuge of lies. "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that a man can wrap himself in it."

The inability of sinners is of a peculiar kind. It is an inability of the heart only; an inability wherein they are wholly voluntary—to which they consent and which they prefer and choose. It ought, therefore, to be called an indisposition rather than an inability. For indeed it consists wholly in an indisposition of heart to truth and duty. If this indisposition were removed—if it were not voluntarily cherished, the inability would wholly cease. If sinners were but willing to receive and obey the truth, they would be sufficiently able. Now surely this indisposition, this unwillingness to receive and obey the truth can be no excuse for any sin whether of omission or commission, being in itself a very great sin and the root of all other sins. As well might the undutiful and rebellious child plead his inveterate hatred of his good parent as an excuse for his undutiful conduct toward that parent, or the murderer plead his malice to justify his murder.

But the sinner pleads, further, that he cannot cure this indisposition; that he cannot make himself willing to love and obey the truth. In the same sense cannot the drunkard make himself willing to forsake his cups and to be temperate and sober. In the same sense cannot the indolent man make himself willing to apply industriously to the business of his calling. In the same sense, the malicious man cannot renounce his malice, and overcome his evil temper, and imbibe and act from the principles of good nature and humanity. In the same sense the covetous and churlish cannot divest themselves of their narrow and selfish spirit, and become generous and beneficent. Yet no man sup-

poses that these, or that any other vicious characters are at all excusable on account of their respective inabilities. And no more is the impenitent sinner to be excused on account of his inability to repent and believe the gospel.

But the sinner again pleads that he did not bring this inability on himself, but was born with it. If he had brought it on himself, he will allow, perhaps, that he would have been blamable on account of it. But as he did not bring it on himself, he thinks this fact ought in justice to excuse him. But let us examine this point by the examples just adduced. The malicious, the ill-natured, the peevish, the covetous and churlish, are all frequently born with their respective evil biases; and these peculiar biases may be discerned in them even when they are children, and long before they have had time to contract them from the evil examples of others. Yet none of us suppose that they are on that account to be excused in their several vices, or vicious tempers. Therefore the being born with a vicious bias does not, in the common sense of mankind, excuse any man in the indulgence of that evil bias, or in the evil practice that flows from it. For the same reason, the being born with a heart indisposed to comply with the gospel, excuses no man in his neglect to comply with it. You yourselves who make this plea to excuse your impenitence and unbelief, do not at all excuse your neighbor who is constantly acting a malicious part toward you, because he was born with a vicious temper. Be not, then, so inconsistent with yourselves as to urge this apology in your own vindication. You cannot but see that it is a refuge of lies; therefore trust to it no longer.

But as this is such a favorite refuge of sinners—one to which they so often and constantly resort, I am willing to consider it in various lights, in order if possible to drive them from it. If, then, this were a true and safe refuge for them, it would certainly be acknowledged as such by God. If it be a sufficient excuse for the depraved sinner in neglecting to comply with the gospel that he is naturally indisposed to comply, then God would doubtless allow it. He would allow that every sinner who is naturally indisposed to comply with the gospel, may with impunity continue in non-compliance; would allow that if he goes as far as he has a heart to go, he would do all that he is in duty bound to do. He would allow that the impenitent sinner is under no obligation to repent, but may with a clear conscience and with entire impunity remain in his impenitence. He would allow that the unbeliever is under no obligation to believe on Christ, but may still persist in his unbelief; and that no enemy to God is under obligation to become reconciled to him, but may still with safety

remain at enmity with him. He would also allow that no wicked, unregenerate sinner, no matter how abominable his character, is under any obligation to become a good man, and a true christian but that he may with impunity still continue as he is.

But how is it in fact? Does God indeed give us such a latitude as to duty or obligation as this? Do the scriptures which contain his word speak this language? Where are the passages? I may safely challenge you to point them out, and boldly assert that you will be able to produce nothing of this nature from the whole word of God. On the contrary, there sinners are called on, exhorted, and commanded to comply with the gospel; and promises are made to them if they do comply while threatenings are denounced against them if they do not. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength." "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

If again, this plea of inability be a true and safe refuge for sinners, then the validity of it would be allowed at the final judgment;—and on the ground of it God would acquit all who could with truth make it. For God is a perfectly just judge, and at the last day will allow every sinner to make any just plea in his own vindication, and will give it its full weight. So that if this be a just plea or excuse for impenitence, or unbelief, or any other sin, no man at the day of judgment will be condemned for those sins; but God will say to him if impenitent, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou didst not indeed repent as I in the gospel commanded you to do, but thou hadst no heart, no willingness to obey, to repent and forsake thy sins, and on this ground I acquit thee. Enter into the joy of thy Lord." To the unbeliever he will say, "Thou hast indeed rejected the gospel, and all its offered grace; thou hast treated with perfect contempt my only begotten and well beloved son, yet as thou wast wholly unwilling to accept the former, or receive and trust in the latter, this is a sufficient excuse. Therefore I acquit thee. Well done, good and faithful, enter into the joy of thy Lord." This I say we might certainly expect would be the language of our great judge, if there were any force in the plea of inability to comply with the gospel. But how contrary to all this is the language of our Savior! "This," he says, "is the

condemnation that light hath come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." And again, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." In the same spirit. too, is that passage from the apostle, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the spirit of grace?"

From all this it appears that there is no force in the self-justifying plea of sinners drawn from their inability to repent and believe and comply with the gospel; that unbelief is the great sin of the evangelized world; and that it will be the chief cause of their final and eternal condemnation at the last great day.

V. *Some men have recourse at different times, to all these refuges, or perhaps to several of them at the same time.*

They do not depend upon any one of these, but flee to them all as a general city of refuge consisting of so many particular fortresses or citadels; and when beaten from one they betake themselves to another; sometimes they plead in justification of themselves their ignorance, and that they are not satisfied as to the doctrines and duties of the gospel; but being convinced of the insufficiency of this plea, and that they might inform and satisfy themselves if they would, and that therefore their ignorance is voluntary and inexcusable, they have recourse to their good works—their justice, morality, or outward attendance on means, and depend on these in the manner already described. Being driven hence by a conviction of the imperfection and insufficiency of their good works, they fly to the absolute and infinite mercy and grace of God. Being driven hence they shield themselves under their inability. And when this is made to appear inadequate to their purpose, they fly back to some of their former refuges, endeavoring to rest on them as a satisfying ground of hope.

Sometimes, too, as I have already hinted, they will take possession of several of these refuges at the same time, expecting to make up by the others what is wanting in some of them. For example, they think themselves in a good measure excusable on account of their ignorance. But fearing to depend wholly on this, so far as they *do* know, they plead that they have good works to show, and bring them in aid of their ignorance. Not daring, however, to pretend to perfection of goodness, they hope God

will be merciful and overlook their imperfections. And still being doubtful of this, they derive much ease and comfort from their inability. Thus they have a manifold ground of dependence; and what is lacking in one part they expect will be supplied by another. But as every part is essentially deficient—is wholly a refuge of lies, the same is true of the whole taken together.

Before I leave this head, I cannot but observe, that often sinners pervert the most wholesome and important truths in order to quiet their consciences or justify themselves. When they are taught the total depravity of human nature, they own it perhaps, and make themselves easy on that subject by saying, "What can such poor, lost, depraved creatures do in religion? surely nothing at all." When on the other hand they are exhorted to repent, and believe, and comply with the gospel, they at once fly to the idea that they are not totally depraved, but have a good principle within them, which they need but to cultivate to make them good enough. When they are shown, however, that none but the regenerate ever do or will comply with God's requirements, they quietly sit down in the idea that being unregenerate and having no power to comply, they are not therefore to be blamed. When, however, they are taught that they are to be blamed for not complying with the gospel, and that their inability is only and wholly voluntary, and of the moral kind, then they take courage, and flatter themselves that they have power enough, and can use it whenever they wish, and in this idea become self-sufficient and self-righteous; and presuming on the future, neglect religion for the present. In this manner do sinners fly from one excuse to another and pervert the most wholesome truths of the gospel, in order to quiet their consciences and go on calmly and without remorse in the way that leads to hell. Amazing their folly! Astonishing their madness!

Besides these, I might mention several other false refuges of sinners under the gospel—such as the general custom, or the example of individuals; a false conversion, wherein they have had great terrors, and then great comforts; great zeal, but not according to knowledge; inward suggestions and impulses, etc. But time does not permit me to enlarge on any of these, or on several others that I might mention. I rather hasten to close with some practical uses and reflections. And,

1. Let me entreat you, my hearers, *carefully to examine yourselves in view of this subject.* You see something of what it is to betake yourselves to refuges of lies—refuges which God will sweep away. Apply, then, these general observations to your-

selves, feeling that they may have reference to your case. It is not for me to point out by name those who betake themselves to such false refuges. But you are to judge, in the light of God's truth, of your own characters, whether or not you are of this description. Doubtless there are many such in the world;—but who and where are they? Are there none in our country and nation? Are there not some in this place—in this house? Why not here as well as anywhere else? To suppose that we are so much better than those of any other place or community, would neither be consistent with reason, or christian humility, or even decent modesty. It is admitted by all to be a time of general ease and indifference as to spiritual things. What is the cause of it? If men did but see and believe the truth, having at the same time no false refuge to quiet them, could they remain so listless and secure? Would not the love of God melt, and the wrath of God make them tremble? It is impossible but that it should be so. And so long as they are secure in sin, they have some refuge of lies by which they are lulled into this fearful drowsiness. And as this is the case with secure sinners in general, so it is undoubtedly the case with the secure sinners of this assembly—with every one of you who hear me this day who are out of Christ, and exposed to the damning curse of God's holy law, while yet you are unconcerned about it. I entreat you, therefore, to examine carefully and candidly what is your refuge —what your ground of confidence—what the cause of your present security and negligence of your everlasting interests? Is it a pretence of ignorance, and want of satisfying information as to the truth? Or is it the plea of innocence and good works? Or is it your own inability, or the infinite grace and mercy of God? Put these questions to yourselves, not in a hasty and careless manner, but seriously, deliberately, and with candid reflection upon your own temper and conduct. Remember that God is present with you while you are doing it. And if upon such an examination you shall find that you are making a refuge of any or all of these things, then,

2. *Be exhorted at once to abandon them.* Remember that they are refuges of lies, which will deceive you just in proportion as you put your confidence in them. You would not choose to be deceived as to your temporal affairs. Much less should you wish to be in affairs of infinite moment, in those that relate to the salvation of the soul. But these false refuges will deceive you to your eternal ruin. Or rather now they will not deceive you; for so far as they have been made known to you, you cannot be deceived by them. You now know what they are, and

what is your danger from them. If, then, you still will trust to them, you do it wilfully, against the light of your own minds, with your eyes open, and knowing what the consequences will be to yourselves. Consider, then, those consequences as they are expressed in the strong and even terrible language of our text. "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." In the days of Noah the waters overflowed the loftiest habitations of man, and even the peaks of the highest mountains, and swept the inhabitants of the world from all their refuges of supposed safety away to ruin and death. All the high places of the earth proved to them but refuges of lies. The waters also rolled themselves into all the caves and dens of the earth, and drowned those who had there taken refuge. "And as it was in the days of Lot, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." The fire and brimstone which God rained down from heaven on the inhabitants of Sodom soon consumed or swept away their places of refuge, as though it had been by a deluge of liquid fire. And so shall all your vain hiding places and your false refuges be overflowed and swept away, and you too if you continue in them, in that dreadful storm of wrath and fiery indignation which God will pour down upon the wicked. What then will you do for a refuge—for a hiding place, when the universe is dissolved and the world is in flames? How will you then be amazed when you shall find your foundation giving way from beneath you—when you shall find by too late experience that all that was told you of false confidences and refuges of lies, was real truth? How will you be vexed at yourselves, and at your madness in trusting to them, and that too when you were so clearly and fully warned of your danger? Deep must have been the vexation and self-reproaches of the old world, and the inhabitants of Sodom, at their own folly and madness, when they found all the predictions of Noah and Lot verified, and also found that though they had had sufficient opportunity to escape, yet now it was too late, and they must perish! But far greater is the folly and madness of which you are guilty, in neglecting to escape from not a temporal death or deluge, but from the endless wrath and vengeance of God, which will not only sweep you away from all your false confidences, but will bury you in eternal death and wo, where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.

Especially what consummate, what infinite folly and madness are you guilty of in trusting to any refuge of lies when a true and

proper and perfectly safe refuge is provided for you and freely offered to your acceptance. "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste." Here is a sure and safe hiding place; for God himself hath declared that "a man shall be a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of waters in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Abandon, then, all false refuges, all vain hiding places, and come to this sure foundation, this refuge of safety. To it you are invited, and urged, and besought to flee, by the strongest and most persuasive motives that can be either exhibited or conceived. Yield then to those motives, and flee to this refuge that you may be safe forever. Or if you will not do this—if you will not abandon your false confidences and grounds of hope, at least let me obtain one thing of you. And that is,

3. *That you will at least act an open and manly and decided part in this important affair.* Confess openly that you do and that you mean to make lies your refuge, and under falsehood to hide yourselves. It is best to be open and explicit in our temporal affairs, and much more so in things that relate to eternity. By "a fair show in the flesh" you may indeed deceive men but you cannot deceive God. He knows your real character and temper and conduct as well without this confession as with it. Nothing, therefore, can be gained by concealment. On the other hand an open acknowledgment of the real truth may tend to strike conviction to your own consciences, to bring your characters to your own view, and make you attend to your own hearts. In this view it may be of signal service to you, for it may waken and rouse you to flee from the wrath to come. Confess then openly and plainly that for the sake of present peace of conscience and to quiet the fears of God's wrath—that in order to gratify your carnal, covetous or ambitious desires you are resolved to lay hold of every plausible ground of hope of God's favor, or of future safety and felicity, and of every plausible excuse for your own impenitence and unbelief. Admit that you care not what the pretence or excuse is, if you can but persuade yourself that it is true, and can find in it present peace. Admit that you are resolved to grasp the present world, and present comfort, no matter what becomes of the future; that you are determined to secure your temporal interest, and to enjoy the pleasures of this life, whether in the future you inherit heaven or hell—whether you are saved or damned. Admit, in short, that for your part you will eat and

drink though tomorrow you die; that you *will* say to your soul, "take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry," though it be at the hazard of hearing that awful voice from the heavens, "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required;" admit all this, and it might alarm you, and by God's grace it might rouse you to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

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SERMON XXI.

THE PARTING COMMENDATION.*

ACTS 20: 32.—*And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

IN this chapter is an account of part of Paul's journey from Philippi to Jerusalem. Ephesus was in proconsular Asia. It was a place where the apostle had labored much, and where at one time he had spent two years, (ch. 19: 8—11.) He was the founder of the church there; the spiritual father of its members. He had built them up and made them what they were. And now as he is going to Jerusalem, not knowing what was to befal him there; as he could not visit Ephesus, he sends from Miletus, a sea-port near, for the elders of the Ephesian church to come and meet him. On their arrival he addresses them in a very affectionate and solemn manner in the farewell discourse of which our text is a part. He tells them in much tenderness that they shall see his face no more; and then after advice on various points he leaves them with God in the language of our text. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

In dwelling on these words, I would show 1. What it is to commend to God, and to the word of his grace; 2. What is presupposed in this; 3. In what sense his word is able to build us up, and to give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

I. *What is it to commend to God, and to the word of his grace?*

1. What is it to commend *to God?* It is,

* A farewell discourse to the church and society in New Haven, May 24, 1795. The body of this sermon, as far as the "Improvement," was left by the author in the shape of brief notes. As these notes have been filled up only by the addition of the needful connecting words, the discourse as here presented gives but an imperfect idea of what it must have been as originally delivered. The *application* was written out in full by the author.

(1) To leave with God. It is to leave the individual to his guidance and counsel, to his gracious teaching and to the influence of his spirit. By his spirit he influences all good men. He restrains, animates and excites them to duty. He guards them from mistakes and temptations, from dishonoring his name, from sins of omission and of commission. All are liable to innumerable errors, to mistakes in judgment both through misinformation and depraved passions;—are liable to the influence of corruption within; and to constant and sore temptations from the world and the great adversary of the soul. And from all these things we need protection, and God is able and willing to render it to us. And to commend one to God, is to leave him with God for this end.

Nor is this all. We not only need protection but to be excited to duty; to love God and his law, and Christ and his gospel; to love the Lord our God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves; to cherish the spirit of repentance, and humility, and meekness, and gentleness, and all the christian graces. We also need to be incited to christian practice. It is not sufficient that we have the temper of Christ; but we are to carry out that temper in our practice, and endeavor to do so perfectly. We should aim at entire obedience to the will of God. And for this holy practice, we need the influence of the Holy Spirit; and to commend one to God is to leave him with God for this end, that he may obtain this influence to sanctify him for every good word and work.

To commend one to God is also to leave him with God, that grace may be given him according to his day. It is to leave him with God in prosperity, that he may use it aright; that he may not be lifted up with pride or vanity or ostentation, so as to pervert his blessings to covetousness or any unhallowed ends; but that he may use them with humility, with a feeling sense of his dependence, with devout gratitude, acknowledging God in them all, and ever remembering his accountability, and that with all he has he is bound to do good as the steward and servant of Christ. It is also to commend him to God's grace in adversity, that he may be supported; that he may neither faint nor be stupid under the divine dealings; that he may neither murmur nor despise the chastening of the Lord, but receive it as the discipline of a wise and tender parent. And in general it is to leave with God, that in all circumstances of life, whatsoever they may be, his grace may be according to our need.

(2) To commend others to God, is also to pray to God for them according to their circumstances and necessities. It is to

offer earnest prayer for them that they may be kept from all evil and excited to all good; that they may be kept from dishonoring God, from bringing reproach to his name or injury to his cause. It is to pray that they may be excited to the exercise of every christian temper and the practice of every christian duty, so as in all things to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. These two things, then, seem mainly to be implied in commending a person to God; that we commit him in confidence to the divine keeping and guidance, and that by earnest prayer we ask for him all needed grace and blessing, for all the circumstances of life.

2. What is it to commend a person *to the word of God's grace?* It is,

(1) Earnestly to recommend to him a firm belief of the gospel. This is the word of his grace; the word that reveals and teaches his grace, and that freely offers it to all. And this word must be believed, if we would derive from it any spiritual benefit.

(2) It is to recommend an habitual attention to the gospel. It is to urge to the daily and serious perusal of it, and to a faithful attendance on all the means of grace, in which it is expounded and made plain.

(3) It is to recommend a cordial complacency in the gospel. This is essential. If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, he must be anathema—accursed. Any faith that does not lead to this, is but a dead faith.

(4) It is to recommend a practice according to the gospel. We must be not only hearers of the word but doers.

(5) It is to recommend a persevering adherence to the gospel; to all its doctrines and all its precepts. It is only by continuance in well doing that we can secure to ourselves glory and honor and immortality; only by being faithful unto death that we shall receive a crown of life.

II. *What is presupposed in commending a person to God and to the word of his grace?*

It presupposes that we are entirely dependent on God; that we are not sufficient for ourselves. We are dependent on him to preserve and protect, to excite and animate, in our faith and our practice. We ever need the assisting grace of God that we may be faithful and accepted in duty. Difficulties and dangers are about us, and we need to be guided and kept and saved from them. Sinners are not awakened and converted, and there is danger that many of them may never be. Christians have declined in spirituality, and grown cold and formal, and by falling into temptation and inconsistency have dishonored the cause of Christ.

The church is not free from danger; danger of divisions and errors and general coldness and backsliding. And in all these respects we are dependent on God to keep us by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. This is the foundation—the ground of necessity for commending ourselves to God and to the word of his grace.

III. *In what sense is the word of divine grace able to build us up, and give us an inheritance among all them that are sanctified?*

1. It is *adapted* to build us up. By the word of grace is meant the gospel. This is adapted to our edification. It is fitted to instruct and animate, and excite to every grace; to lead us to repentance and faith in Christ, to humility and love and joy, to meekness and gentleness, and all the graces of the spirit. Its truths and facts and promises, its invitations and warnings, all the views which it presents of Christ and of eternity, are adapted to produce this effect upon us. And,

2. God has *promised* they shall have this effect on those who receive and improve them. "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." And of the servant that wisely improved his Lord's money it is said, "To him that hath shall be given." Edification, then, is inseparably connected with a due improvement of the word.

In the same senses is the gospel, as applied by the Holy Spirit, able to give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified. It is *adapted* to produce these effects that are found in the sanctified, and to which their inheritance is *promised*; so that if we comply with it, and faithfully improve it, we shall have a title, through divine grace to that inheritance, and finally be received to enjoy it forever.

IMPROVEMENT.

It now remains that I make the application of this subject to the present important and solemn occasion. You, brethren, and I, have long been united in a most intimate and tender and solemn relation. It is twenty-six years, last January, since I was constituted your pastor. Among you I have spent my youth and the vigor of my life. We have been together in joy and sorrow. I have endeavored to be faithful to you as a minister of the New Testament, and you I would hope have endeavored to improve my ministry. At length, God, in his wise providence, has so disposed events that the relation between us is dissolved. And I could think of no more proper words from which to address you in this my farewell discourse than those of our text. I could

think of nothing that more truly expresses the feelings of my heart than these words of the apostle. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." A christian pastor leaving his people, ought certainly to leave them with God and with the word of his grace; earnestly to pray to God for them, and to recommend them to go to God for every needed good. And this, brethren, I most cordially and solemnly do for you.

It is an agreeable circumstance that our separation has been attended with so much calmness and moderation. To have separated in any other manner would have been very unsuitable to the character of christians which, before God and men, we have assumed. Let us still observe the same line of conduct and persevere in it. This church have unanimously voted me "their thanks for all the good they have experienced by my ministry; the assurance of their brotherly love and high respect for me, and of their prayers for the success of my future ministry." And on my part, I have "thanked them for all their expressions of kindness to me during my ministry among them, and have assured them of my brotherly love and respect for them, and of my prayers for their future prosperity." This is truly commending each other to God and the word of his grace. May his blessing and his grace ever be with us.

As it has been my duty for so many years to give you such instruction and advice as appeared to be founded in truth and profitable to you, so it is now highly proper that I should continue to give similar advice in this my farewell discourse.

You, brethren of this church and society, have from the beginning professed to believe the great distinguishing doctrines of free grace. This has been your glory. Let me beseech you to persevere in the same faith and profession, and to hold fast the form of sound words once delivered to the saints. These are times of degeneracy. Corrupt principles and practices amazingly prevail in our land. Even gross infidelity lifts up its head among us, and much more other loose and most dangerous principles. I entreat you to be on your guard against them. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. Let this church ever be, and ever appear to be a firm pillar and ground of the truth in this place. For this end let it guard against the first encroachments of error and false doctrine. It is much easier to withstand the entrance of these, than to eradicate them after they have once taken root. And consider how dishonorable as well as ruinous it will be, for you to give up these essential evangelical truths,

on which you have hitherto been established. Be faithful, too, as a church to the obedience of the faith. Live yourselves so as to be lights in the world, so as to be epistles of Christ known and read of all men. Let your light so shine before men, that they shall be led to glorify your Father which is in heaven. As individual professors be holy; and as a church keep yourselves pure, by being careful in the admission of members, and if need be by wholesome discipline.

Another advice proper to this occasion, is, that which Joseph gave to his brethren after he had made himself known to them. "See that ye fall not out by the way." Divisions in churches and societies are exceedingly common in these days. How many congregations have been by division broken up and destroyed! Diversity of sentiments concerning doctrine and discipline is the common cause of ecclesiastical divisions. But if you, brethren, hold fast to the sound doctrines of your fathers, you will not be divided by this cause. Private views, ambitious projects, resentment of real or supposed injuries or abuses, are the sources of division. I hope, brethren, you will diligently guard yourselves against them, and against everything tending to mar the peace and prosperity of the church.

Let me further exhort you, not only to hold the truth, but to hold it in the love and in active obedience of it. To love and to obey the truth are as necessary as to believe it. Indeed that belief of it which implies love and a disposition to obey, is the only belief to which all the promises of the gospel are made. Therefore cultivate this faith in your own souls with all diligence and prayer to God. Enjoin it too upon your children and the rising generation, that when you shall have gone to your rest, they may be prepared to fill your places in this as well as in other respects. The rising generation is the hope of the flock. If they be suffered to grow up in loose principles and practices, it will be no wonder if religion both in practice and profession decline among you. If on the other hand you that are parents do what in you lies to teach and inculcate on your children good principles, good affections and good practices, exhibiting yourselves proper examples, and attending all with your fervent prayers to the father of mercies that he would crown your exertions with his blessing and grace, you have many and great encouragements that it shall not be in vain. Having thus addressed you all as a church in general, I would now conclude with an application to several classes of persons in particular.

1. To *the church of Christ* in this place. This church is a city set on a hill. It stands in a conspicuous place, easily seen

and actually observed. Your professed attachment to the doctrines of grace, has rendered you more abundantly the objects of observation. It concerns you therefore on this account to act a consistent and uniform part. If you, brethren, should betray your principles and renounce your former purity in doctrine and discipline, what a wound would you give to the cause of truth; what a dishonor to yourselves; what an occasion of grief to all the friends of Jesus, and of exultation and triumph to the enemies of the cross! Wherefore take heed to yourselves and your whole christian conduct, both as a church and as individuals. In so doing you will adorn the doctrine of God your Savior, and after my departure from you I shall still have the joy of hearing that you are walking in the truth.

2. Let me address *those who are not professors of religion.* There are many such in this society. You have not yet seen fit to come forward and confess Christ before men by an explicit confession of the gospel, and by publicly entering into covenant with him. Some of you may stand thus at a distance from mere scruples as to your preparation, and others from an apprehension but to well founded that you are not at all prepared. As to the former of these classes, it becomes them to endeavor to have their scruples removed by the evidence of the truth, and then openly to confess Christ agreeably to his own positive directions. As to those who are really unprepared for the seals of the covenant, they ought to remember that their want of preparation is their own sin, and therefore will never justify them in the sight of God. It is the indispensable duty of all to become prepared, and then to make an open confession to the world that they have chosen the Lord as their God and Christ as their Savior. And till they do this they are inexcusable in the sight of God. And now that I am about to close my ministry here and to leave you who are of this class, it is affecting to think that I leave you in this state, unprepared for the Lord's supper, and therefore unfitted for death and heaven. May God, of his infinite mercy, have pity on you, and awake and convert you, and thus prepare you for his ordinances here, and for heaven hereafter.

3. I would also address myself to *all who are careless sinners.* Of these there are several descriptions. Some are grossly immoral; others are moral. Some neglect the means of grace and ordinances of worship; others attend on these ordinances. But all are careless and secure in their Christless state. And now that I am about to leave this people, so long under my charge, it is melancholy and affecting to leave any of you still without God and without hope; to leave you in a world that is full of temptations and snares that may entangle and destroy your souls.

But to leave so many of you careless and unaffected with your situation, with your deep guilt and exposure to God's wrath, is still more sad and grievous. O! let me beseech you in all the earnestness and tenderness of this our parting hour, as I have often done in time past, to awake from these your dangerous slumbers lest soon it be forever too late. By the value of your souls and the alarming danger of their eternal loss, awake ye who are thus sleeping and arise from the dead that Christ may give you life.

4. I would address those of you *who are thoughtful and anxiously inquiring* the way of salvation. It is a token for good that there are some such among us. It shows that God has not entirely forsaken us. May he greatly increase the number of such, and bring their awakenings to a saving issue. In the mean time let me beseech those of you who are the subjects of such awakenings to take heed that you resist not and quench not the Holy Spirit of God which is striving with you. Encourage his influences, and comply with his dictates. Hear, that your souls may live. Do this, and God will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. But if you draw back, God shall have no pleasure in you, and you will make your perdition sure.

5. In the last place I would address in a few words *this whole society*. As already observed, we have been connected as minister and people for more than six and twenty years. How I have discharged my duty in this important relation, and how you have improved under my ministry, it does not become me to declare. But God is our common judge. Before him we are all soon to stand, and render our account. *I* must answer whether I have faithfully delivered the truth as it is in Jesus, and declared the whole counsel of God; and *you* must answer whether you have received and loved and obeyed the truth which has been delivered to you. May those of you who have profited by the truth, profit still more and more. May those who have not, yet profit by it in future. And may God provide for your future instruction and spiritual good, such means as may have the most direct and powerful tendency to lead you all to himself. Particularly may he provide for you a pastor after his own heart, who shall be abundantly qualified for the duties of the ministry among you, and who by the influence of the Holy Spirit co-operating with his labors, shall be abundantly successful in winning souls to Christ.

"Finally, brethren, farewell! Be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Amen!"

SERMON XXII.

GOD THE AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD VOLITIONS AND ACTIONS.*

PHILIPPIANS 2: 13.—*It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

THE gospel is a scheme of salvation on certain conditions. These are reconciliation to God, repentance of sin, and cordial faith in Christ as an atoning Redeemer. But how are we to attain to these christian graces? Our text informs us. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

From these words I propose to show, 1. That God is the author of all our good *dispositions*; "he worketh in us to *will*;" 2. That he is the author of all our good *actions*; "he worketh in us to *do*;" and 3. That both these are the effects of his *sovereign grace*; "of *his good pleasure*."

I. *God works in us "to will," and is the author of all good dispositions.*

This is abundantly taught in the sacred scriptures. 2 Cor. 3: 5, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." Heb. 13: 20, 21, "Now the God of grace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight," etc. 1 Pet. 5: 10, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you." John 15: 5, "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." James 1: 17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." 1 Cor. 15: 10, "By the grace of God, I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me."

Again, all morally good dispositions are implanted in the heart

* First preached before the General Association of Connecticut, 1794.

in regeneration. For naturally all men are wholly indisposed to the love and service of God, and to the exercise and practice of true religion, in which compliance with the gospel consists. In regeneration the heart is reconciled to God, to his character, to his will, to his law, to his government, to his sovereign grace, and to the conditions of salvation revealed in the gospel. It also becomes disposed to love mankind in general with sincere benevolence, and true christians with both benevolence and complacency. Thus it is disposed to all virtue and all piety. But regeneration is the work of God. John 1: 12, 13, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man; but of God." Thus God works in us *to will.*

II. *God also works in us "to do," and is the author of all good actions.*

To do, in the sense of this passage, is something more than *to will.* It is not mere mental, but external doing. All right external conduct implies a good heart, or will; but not every degree of goodness of heart is sufficient to lead to general external obedience. Some higher and peculiar degree of goodness of heart and temper is necessary to this. And this higher degree of goodness of heart is from God. As he gives the lowest, so he does the highest; and such a degree whether it be the highest or not, as will lead to sincere christian obedience. He that begins a good work, must carry it on in all its steps. "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God must give the increase."

III. *These are the effects of God's sovereign grace; the effects of his good pleasure."*

Here it may be proper to explain what we mean by the divine sovereignty.

1. We mean that God is absolutely supreme and uncontrolled. This must needs be the case, as he is omnipotent, and without a superior. To suppose that he is under control, is to suppose he is not the supreme being; but that he by whom he is controlled is superior to him. Dan. 4: 35, "None can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?"

2. The sovereignty of God implies that he ever acts as he pleases. Ps. 135: 6, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and all deep places."

3. That the sovereignty of God does not imply, that he acts arbitrarily. This is the erroneous and groundless construction which some give of the divine sovereignty: that God acts as he pleases, merely because he pleases or wills to do so; and not be-

cause it is the dictate of wisdom and according to eternal right. But such an idea of sovereignty is dishonoring to God. Though he always does what pleases him, yet he always pleases to do what wisdom dictates and what is subservient to the general good of the moral system; and this is always right and best, is always perfectly wise and benevolent, and directly subservient to the most glorious and important ends.

This sovereignty is exercised by God, in working in some of mankind both to will and to do; in working in them powerfully and effectually as he pleases and on whom he pleases, and yet wisely and benevolently.

I am well aware that to this doctrine of the sovereign and efficacious grace of God, several objections have been raised. Let us consider some of these, that if they appear to have sufficient weight, we may, as in that case we ought to do, reject the doctrine; but if not, that we may be the more firmly established in the belief of it.

1. It is objected, that if God work in us all good dispositions of heart and actions of life, *this destroys our agency;* that on this plan we do nothing, but God does all; that all our actions are the mere actions of God, and that we are no agents at all but mere patients. To this I answer, that these consequences by no means follow from our doctrine. Though God work in us both to will and to do, yet we are agents and do act. This is expressly taught in our context taken with the text. "Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Therefore though God work all in us, yet we do work out our own salvation. This is perfectly agreeable to reason as well as to scripture. If God do produce holy exercises and acts in us, still they are our acts, as much so as those thoughts which God excites in us are our thoughts; and we might as well say that those thoughts are not ours, but the thoughts of the divine mind, as to say that those volitions which God produces in us are not our acts, but the acts of God. If God excite in any man, evangelical repentance and godly sorrow for sin, will it be pretended that it is not the repentance and sorrow of the man in whose mind they are excited, but the repentance and sorrow of the divine mind? And if God produce in a man that faith which is his gift, whereby the man trusts in Christ as his Savior, will it be pretended that this trust is not the trust of the man, but an act in which God himself trusts in Christ as his Savior? Such is the absurdity into which this objection plunges the objector. Such is the absurdity of supposing that an act caused by the Deity in us, is not our own act, but the act of him who caused it.

In further answer to this objection, it may be useful to consider what is an action and what an agent. If we establish the true idea of these, it will immediately appear whether we are agents, and whether we act or do anything, or whether we are mere patients. Those who make this objection mean by *action* a self-determinate action, of which we are the sole efficient causes. And by *agent*, they mean one who acts thus self-determinately, and sets himself to action by his own efficiency. Now if this be the true idea of action and agent, I grant that any emotion produced in us by God is not our action, and that in such emotion we are not agents. For it is absurd and contradictory, that an emotion should be the sole effect of God, and yet the sole effect of ourselves; or that in that emotion we should be entirely self-moved and determined by our own efficiency, and yet that we should be moved and determined by a divine efficiency. But I deny that this is the true idea of an action and of an agent.

A self-determinate action is an absurdity and an impossibility. It runs into an infinite series of actions determining or causing one another. The present volition, for example, of any man's mind, must be caused by a preceding volition; and that preceding volition must, for the same reason, be caused by another preceding that, and that by another, and so on forever, or at least until you arrive at the first volition of which the man was ever the subject; and that by the supposition being the first, cannot have been caused by a preceding volition of that man, and therefore is not self-determined, and according to the forementioned definition is no action. And for the same reason, all the subsequent volitions arising from this as its cause, being not self-determinate, are no actions. Therefore this scheme confutes itself; for though it assumes to be the only scheme which admits of action and agency in man, yet it really excludes all action and agency from us.

Another absurdity attending this idea of action and agency is, that though it is supposed that the mind causes one volition by another, and that the causing volition is distinct from the caused volition, still it will be found that they in fact are not distinct from each other, but really coincide, and are one and the same. Let us take as an example this, that a man determines himself to read a chapter in the bible. In the first place he determines or chooses to read the chapter. But this choice is caused by a preceding choice. Therefore he chooses to choose to read the chapter. But what is this beside a barely choosing to read it? It is manifestly nothing different from it, but is the very same thing; and after all this parade of our choice causing or choosing ano-

ther, there is nothing but a bare choice, or determination to read the chapter. Let us take another example. Suppose a man determines himself to love God. He does it by choosing to love him; that is he chooses to love God before he loves him, and thus causes the love of God in his own heart. But this choosing to love God is no other than actually loving him, and cannot be distinguished from it. In whatever sense, and from whatever motive a man chooses to love God, in the same sense, and from the same motive, in some degree at least, he actually does love him. But I need not multiply examples.

Another absurdity attending this supposition, that a man causes his own volitions, is, that he causes them without motive and without design, and therefore blindly, and by mere chance. The advocates for the self-determining power, universally oppose and reject the idea that we are influenced by motives, and suppose it to be as inconsistent with human agency and action, as the doctrine of a divine influence working in us all good dispositions and actions. Therefore it would be inconsistent in them to allow that we exercise the self-determining power under the influence of motives. Such a self-determination as this, is no self-determination at all, but a determination by motives. Self-determination therefore is, in its very nature, a determination without motive; and a determination without motive, is a determination without design; and a determination without design, is a determination in the dark, or a blind determination, a determination at hap-hazard and by mere chance. And such an action as this is neither virtuous nor vicious; and is worthy of neither praise nor blame.

If it be said that the mind does indeed determine itself in every act, and is the efficient cause of its own volitions, but not by a preceding volition, then the inquiry will arise, "How then does it efficiently cause its own volitions?" If it cause them by an act of the will, it causes them by a preceding volition. If it cause them not by an act of the will, it does not cause them voluntarily; and it will not be pretended that a man acts, or is an agent in causing or doing anything involuntarily, and without his will.

As to that part of the objection which states, that if God work all good dispositions and actions in us we are mere patients and not agents, it may be observed that our good dispositions and actions either have a cause, or they have no cause. If they have a cause, that cause is either ourselves or one extrinsic to ourselves. It cannot be ourselves, for the reasons already given. It must therefore be an extrinsic cause. If they have no cause at all,

we are no more the cause of them than we are on the supposition that they are the effect of an extrinsic cause. And consequently if agency consists in causing our actions internal as well as external, we are no more agents on the supposition that our volitions came into existence without a cause, than we are on the supposition that they are the effect of an extrinsic cause. Besides the advocates for that kind of agency which I am opposing will not pretend that our volitions came into existence without any cause, and by mere chance.

It remains therefore, as they would avoid the forementioned absurdities attending the supposition that our volitions are the effects of our own efficiency; that they allow that they are the effects of an extrinsic cause; and this extrinsic cause may, as consistently with our agency, be the Deity as any other.

Nor is there any difficulty in allowing this, if we have just ideas of action and agency? The true idea of internal or mental action is, that it consists in volition or voluntary emotion; and of external action, that it is an action of the body proceeding from volition.

Now this being the true idea of an action there is no difficulty in allowing that it may be the effect of some extrinsic cause. A volition is a volition, let it be the effect of what it may, whether of an intrinsic, or an extrinsic cause. And as a volition may be the effect of an extrinsic cause, so may an action be; for every volition is an action.

As to that part of the objection which represents that we are mere patients in volition if it be produced by an extrinsic cause, I observe; that though we are patients in that we are the subjects of the operation of the cause which produces volition, yet we are active in the volition itself; just as a body which is acted upon by another body, and thus set in motion, is a patient, in that it is acted upon by that body, but in the motion which is the immediate effect, it is active.

If it should be still urged, that a volition produced by an extrinsic cause is no action at all, because it is not produced by the man whose volition it is; this would be a shameful begging of the question. It would be taking it for granted, that an action in its very nature is and must be self-determinate, which is the very thing in dispute.

2. Another objection to our doctrine is, that if God work all good dispositions and actions in us, *we are not free*, and that our liberty is infringed and destroyed. How can we be free in our volitions and actions, it is asked, if God make us to will and to do those actions?

The answer to this objection depends on what we mean by freedom or liberty. If we mean by freedom of action, willingness, and by a free action a voluntary action; in this sense, we may be entirely free, though our actions, internal or external, be caused by the Deity. According to scripture, God does cause in us a willing mind. Psalm 110: 3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." This willing mind is free action. Therefore the divine operation does not destroy free action, but causes and secures it; and the more efficaciously it causes the willing mind or volition, the more certainly and infallibly is our freedom established. To imagine that if God cause our volitions, which are free acts, we are not free, is just as absurd as to imagine that if God make a wall white it is certainly not white but black; or to imagine that if God create a man he certainly is not a man, but a block.

I am very sensible that the idea and definition of free action, now given, will be disputed by some. They will tell us a volition is not a free action, merely because it is a volition; but that in order to be free it must be self-determinate and self-originated, and that the subject of the volition, in becoming the subject of it, must be exempted from all extrinsic causality, and produce the volition by his own efficiency only. But this immediately plunges us into all the absurdities mentioned under the former head of action and agency. These absurdities are,

(1) That either every free volition is the effect of an infinite series of volitions causing each other, and therefore every man must have existed from eternity, else he could not have been the subject of such an infinite series; or every free volition is the effect of a series of volitions extending to the beginning of his existence, or to his first volition at least. But as this first volition cannot be the effect of a preceding volition, it cannot according to the idea of freedom now under consideration, be free. And this first volition which is not determined by the man who is the subject of it, determines all the rest of the series; so that all the rest are really determined by the same cause which determines the first, and therefore are none of them self-determinate, and none of them free in the sense now under consideration.

(2) As all the series of volitions preceding the present one or any supposed one of the series, are really not distinct from the supposed one, but the same with it, it follows that another absurdity attending the idea of liberty now opposed is this: that one and the same thing is supposed to be distinct from itself and the cause of itself. And another is, that all our free volitions are on this supposition without motive or design, and merely by

chance. So the idea that a volition in order to be free, must be self-determinate is replete with absurdity, and is incapable of vindication; it must therefore be relinquished. The advocates of it, may be, as they have been, challenged to vindicate and clear it of the palpable absurdities and contradictions which attend it.

Freedom or liberty is an exemption from something, some incumbrance, obstruction, or compelling power. The only question is, what that is from which liberty, mental liberty is an exemption? As I have already observed, some hold that it is an exemption from all extrinsic influence or causality, and therefore the person who is free, causes his own actions external and internal. I need not further enlarge on this idea of liberty as I have already made some observations upon it. But if those who hold that liberty implies an exemption from all extrinsic causality, do not mean that a free action is caused by ourselves, they must mean that it is caused by nothing, or has no cause. Every volition has a cause, or has no cause. If it have a cause, that cause is either extrinsic to the person whose volition it is, or he himself is the cause of it. Those who oppose us on this subject—utterly deny that it is the effect of an extrinsic cause. And that it is not the effect of the person himself whose volition it is, I have endeavored to show by the absurdities and contradictions attending that supposition; and how far this confutation is valid, I submit to all candid judges, and even challenge our opponents to show the invalidity of it. If it be valid, then it remains that volition has no cause at all, but springs up out of nothing, by mere chance. Whoever espouses this idea of liberty, must reject all arguing of causes from effects, and particularly must reject the proof of the existence of a first cause, from the existence of the visible world, its inhabitants, or any events which have taken place, or may take place in it.

Besides, what desirable freedom is there in having volitions take place in our minds by mere chance? Is there a greater or a more desirable freedom in this, than in having those same volitions take place by the influence of some extrinsic and wise cause? We should in the former case, no more be the cause of, and have no more control over them than in the latter. Yet this is the only freedom which there can be, if freedom be inconsistent with extrinsic influence and causality. For beside the absurdities before observed to be necessarily implied in causing our own internal acts, if it should be allowed that we do cause them, it must also be allowed that we cause them by mere chance. For if we cause them according to any established order, under any superior influence, and in any definite way and manner,

there would be a limitation of our wills and of their acts, and consequently there would be no liberty to either side, no liberty to act or not act; which all hold who hold that extrinsic causality is inconsistent with liberty. If we cause our own volitions, we cause them either according to a certain established order, or by mere chance. If we cause them according to any established order, that order was doubtless established by some superior being, and of course that superior being limits, restrains, and really causes our volitions to be what they are, and thus this hypothesis necessarily leads to an extrinsic cause of all our volitions. If on the other hand we cause them ourselves, by mere chance, then the act or acts by which we cause them take place by mere chance, and consequently the acts caused and the whole of our volitions, take place by mere chance. If the cause of the act be accidental, the effect too is accidental. And what a glorious state of liberty is this! To be driven, like a feather in the wind, or rather like one of Epicurus' atoms in the infinite void!

The true idea of moral liberty, therefore, cannot be an exemption from all extrinsic causality of our actions; but it consists in exemption from all involuntary compulsion and restraint; that is, from that compulsion and restraint to which the will is, or may be opposed. But the will is not, nor can be opposed to itself, or to its own acts. It cannot will, and not will at the same time, and in the same respect. It cannot have a volition, and not have it. Therefore every volition is in its own nature necessarily exempted from involuntary compulsion and restraint, and of course it is, and must be free.

This idea of liberty is directly opposed to that which places it in self-determination, and contingence or chance; nor is there any medium between these two. They who are convinced that the latter is absurd and indefensible, must receive the former; as they who do not receive the former, do, and must receive the latter.

Some profess to believe both human liberty, and the doctrine of divine universal influence taught in our text. At the same time they profess not to be able to reconcile them, or see their mutual consistency. But the truth is, that if human liberty consists in exemption from extrinsic influence and causality, it is impossible to reconcile it with the divine agency working in us both to will and to do; and to believe both this influence, and this kind of liberty, is to believe both parts of a direct contradiction.

But if liberty consist in an exemption from that compulsion to which will is or may be opposed, there is not the least inconsistency, between that and a divine causation of our volitions. Vo-

litions are incapable of compulsion. A compelled volition, would be an involuntary volition, which is a contradiction. Every volition therefore is necessarily free, however the volition came into existence, whether by a divine influence, or in whatever way. And the whole difficulty of reconciling human liberty with divine efficacious influence, and also with the divine decrees, depends upon the definition which we give of human liberty. Indeed upon this depends the so great, and so long agitated dispute concerning human liberty. Let human liberty be defined, and the whole dispute will soon be settled. If it be defined to consist in an exemption from all extrinsic influence and causality, the advocates for this liberty may soon be compelled, it is conceived, to own that we are not free. If it be defined to consist in exemption from involuntary compulsion and restraint, all will allow that in this sense we are free.

3. It is objected that if God work in us both to will and to do, and we be dependent on his aid for all moral good, *we are not accountable*, and are not rewardable, or punishable for any of our conduct. This objection is really one, though it seems to divide itself into two. To be accountable, and to be rewardable or punishable as our conduct may be, is the same thing. Now it is pleaded that we are not rewardable or punishable for any of our actions external or internal, unless we be the efficient cause of them. But that we should be the efficient cause of our own volitions is replete with absurdity, as I have already endeavored to show. This therefore is not necessary to reward or punishment. An absurdity or impossibility cannot be necessary to these. Nor is it necessary to either of these, that we act by chance; and that it be previously uncertain what our actions shall be. A man may be rewardable for one action, and punishable for another, though in both instances it was previously certain in reality, and certainly known too, what his actions would be. It is granted on all hands, that God certainly foreknows all events and all human actions, and therefore they are both certain and known to be so, yet it is not pretended that on this account those actions are neither rewardable nor punishable.

This objection is built on a wrong idea of what constitutes an action rewardable, or punishable, viz. this: that the subject of that action is the efficient cause of it. No intelligent being, either God or creature, is the efficient cause of his own mental actions. If God were the efficient cause of his own volitions, he would be mutable. To effect a volition is to excite it, and the volition in this case is a creature. But a creature necessarily begins its existence in time, and cannot have existed from eternity.

Therefore if God have effected any volition in his own mind, that volition has had its beginning in time, and therefore implies a change in God.

Neither, for reasons already given can any creature be the efficient cause of volitions in himself. Therefore there is no such thing in nature, as an intelligent mind efficiently causing volitions in itself. This then cannot be the ground of reward or punishment.

The true ground of these, seems to be this, that a rational voluntary action tends to good, or to evil. When a man in the exercise of his reason, voluntarily and designedly performs an action which tends in its nature to the general good, or to good on the whole, and with a design to do good, he is rewardable. And on the other hand, when in the exercise of his reason he voluntarily performs an action which tends, and which he knows, or might know tends to the general detriment, or to evil on the whole, he is punishable. And therefore a man in the exercise of his reason, acting voluntarily is accountable for his conduct; and this is all that is necessary to accountableness. It is right and reasonable, that such a man should be rewarded or punished as his conduct may be, because all the good ends of reward and punishment may be obtained in such a case. One end of reward in many cases is to encourage the man rewarded to proceed in good conduct. This end may be obtained by rewarding the man I have described. Being under the government of motives, reward will naturally operate as a motive, and persuade him to continue and proceed in well doing. Another end is to encourage others to do well; and reward in the instance now described, manifestly has a tendency to this. The ends of punishing are correspondent to those of rewarding, viz.: to restrain the subject of the punishment, or others from evil conduct. And I need not observe that punishment in the case before described naturally subserves both these ends. Therefore there is no foundation to say that unless a man be the efficient cause of his own volitions, there is no reason or propriety, in either rewarding or punishing him.

Having now finished what I proposed from this text, I shall conclude with some inferences.

1. Hence we learn *the extent of our dependence on God.* Some suppose we are dependent for our creation and for our preservation, but not for our common actions; that God upholds our being and our faculties, but that we exercise these faculties of ourselves, without any other divine influence than what is implied in his upholding us. But this seems to be contradicted by the text, as well as by all that has come up to our view in con-

sidering the doctrine taught by it. Our text and its doctrine teach us, that we are dependent on a divine influence for every good action, external or internal, as well as for the preservation of our faculties. Therefore sinners are dependent on God to renew and sanctify their hearts; and saints are dependent on him, to uphold, strengthen and edify them. Nor can they any more make progress in the christian life without the influence of God, than they can first begin this life. To God, therefore, we must all look for grace to help in every time of need.

2. We see that it is *no ground of wonder, that the sacred scriptures teach the doctrine of the new birth;* that they declare in peremptory terms, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven;" and "except we be converted, and become as little children, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

3. Hence we see *how foolish, and stupid they are, who live at ease without having experienced the new birth.* To do this is to be at ease in a state of the most imminent danger, exposed at any moment to the endless wrath of God.

4. Hence we infer, that *if any man be not a real christian it is wholly his own fault,* and that he is entirely and solely to be blamed for it. If we be free and accountable creatures, if we be justly blamable for all those voluntary actions, both external and internal which we perform in the possession and exercise of our reason, and which tend not to the general good; then it is wholly a man's own fault, that he lives in alienation from God, and in impenitence and unbelief. And although many, on the ground of their inability to repent and believe, may, in their own apprehensions, excuse themselves for living in this state, yet in reality they are utterly inexcusable; as inexcusable as the drunkard in his intemperance; as the indolent in his idleness; or as the malicious in his revenge.

Therefore let the wicked, the unconverted, the unregenerate, in view of this their inexcusable sinfulness, humble themselves before God in deep abasement; let them repent of this their wickedness, and fly to the blood of the atonement, and for the sake of that pray God that all the wicked thoughts and affections of their hearts, and the wicked fruits thereof in their lives may be forgiven them.

5. It is solely *the fault of christians that they make so little proficiency in the christian life.* It is common for christians to complain that they have so little grace in exercise, that they are so dead, dull and lifeless, and that they have so little evidence from sanctification, of their christian character and privileges.

Of these things they often complain, not in the humble strains of real repentance, but sometimes with a degree of peevishness, and oftener in a way of self-justification, pleading that they have not the influences of the spirit and a sufficiency of the grace of God, as an apology for their unfruitfulness. But if our doctrine be true, all this is utterly wrong. It is adding sin to sin. Therefore instead of this vain self-justification, and instead of this complaining of God for withholding his grace and spirit, let us sincerely confess our own fault to God, be deeply humbled under a sense of it, and forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth to those which are before, let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let us be faithful unto death, and then we shall receive a crown of life.

SERMON XXIII.

THE LAW NOT MADE VOID THROUGH FAITH.*

ROMANS 3: 31.—*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea we establish the law.*

SINCE God created man he has been pleased to treat with him in two several ways, which are called covenants. These covenants are distinguished according to their *order*, as the first and the second covenant, or the old covenant and the new; according to their *different natures*, as the covenant of works and the covenant of grace; and by the apostle in the context as the law of works and law of faith; or, as in our text itself, they are denoted simply by the words "law" and "faith."

In each of these ways of treating with man, God has proposed certain terms or conditions, upon the fulfilment of which on man's part, he might expect to secure the divine favor both here and hereafter. In the former of these covenants or ways of God's treating with man, the terms were perfect obedience to the divine law. He that should continue in all things written in the book of the law to do them, should live in them; but whosoever should fail in any the least of these, should be accursed. The terms of the other covenant are very different. For now God does not require a perfect obedience as the ground of our acceptance with him. Perfect obedience, perfect conformity to the law of God is indeed, now, as ever, the duty of all men. It is as much our duty now under the second covenant to observe the law perfectly as a rule of life, as ever it was under the first covenant; and hence the command of our Lord: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect." Yet notwithstanding it is thus our absolute duty to keep the whole law as a rule of life, we are not required to keep it as a way of securing God's favor, and obtaining final salvation. All that God requires of us now, in order to secure his friendship and our own safety, is that we repent of our sins, and believe and accept of the Lord Jesus Christ as our mediator and Savior. These are the two ways of accept-

* First preached in 1768.

ance and justification in the sight of God, and these are the different terms of each.

Now that we, and all men since the fall are justified and accepted on the last of these footings, viz. of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and not on the former one of the law and perfect obedience to it, is what the apostle abundantly asserts and proves in the former part of this epistle. Thus in the 20th verse of the context he says, "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight;" and again in the 28th verse, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." This being the case then, that we are not accepted, and justified on the footing of the law or by the deeds of the law, but entirely on the footing of faith in a redeemer, the question naturally arises whether, upon this plan of justification by faith, the law was not set aside and made void, of none effect? This question the apostle starts in our text: "Do we then make void the law through faith?" And the answer to it also we have in the same text: "God forbid: yea we establish the law."

To make void the law, as the phrase is here used, means to set it aside and to have no regard to it, to treat it as being repealed, and thus as a mere dead letter. For as the apostle had abundantly declared that we are not justified by the works of law, but by faith without these works, it might naturally seem to follow that the law was now made void, and that no regard was to be had to it, any more than to any other dead letter. But this consequence he most directly denies and rejects. We by no means, says he, make void the law through faith; so far from this is the fact, that on the other hand we establish it. By making void the law through faith he means evidently, as already hinted, making it void by this new plan of justification by faith in Christ, and not barely by the simple act of faith. He here uses the word faith in opposition to the law. And as by "the law" he means the moral law which was the way of acceptance and justification under the first covenant; so by "faith" he intends not merely the simple act of believing, but in general the way and method of justification and salvation under the second covenant.

Let us then inquire wherein it appears, that by this new way of acceptance and justification by faith, the law is indeed not nullified and set aside, but is fully kept up and sustained in its true spirit and import, and not only so, but is even more firmly established than if this new method of justification had never been adopted. In attempting this, two points are before us: 1. To inquire wherein it appears that in the gospel mode of justification

by faith without the deeds of the law, the law is not set aside and made void; and 2. Wherein it appears that the law, in this mode of justification, is further and more effectually established than if this way had never been adopted. We proceed to consider each of these in its order.

I. *Wherein does it appear that in the gospel mode of justification by faith, without the deeds of the law, the law is not set aside and made void?*

Whenever a law is repealed, set aside, or made void, no further regard is had to it; for if any regard or respect is had to it, certainly it is not entirely set aside and made void. So far as any respect is had to it by executive authority, so far it is unrepealed and remains in force. And if the executive authority do in any instance so keep in view any law, as never to allow the least violation of it to pass with impunity, and as always to see that it be maintained in force according to its true spirit and import; then in such a case, that law can in no sense be said to be set aside or made void. Now all this, I trust, upon examination, we shall find true with regard to the law of God in the affair of justification by faith in Christ.

It is manifest that God, who executes his own law, has not been regardless of it in this new plan of pardon and salvation, inasmuch as he has caused an atonement to be made for the breaches and violations of it. This most clearly proves that the law is not set aside and made void. It would be a most absurd thing to make an atonement for the violations of a law, when that law itself was made void, and really had no existence. What need could there be of an atonement for the violations of *such* a law? The breaches of a law which has no existence, are the breaches of nothing; that is, they are no breaches of law at all; for "When there is no law there is no transgression." But to require an atonement when there is no transgression to be atoned for, can never consist with the justice and purity of God. So that this plan of justification and salvation through a redeemer, does not suppose that the law is made null and void; but quite contrarily is founded entirely upon the real existence and continued force and obligation of the law, and is so far from making the law void, that its very existence depends upon the existence of the law itself.

Again, to make an atonement for the breaches of the law is doing no small honor to the law, inasmuch as it is a public declaration, (and that in a way of facts,) of its reasonableness, equity and goodness, and so of its just obligatory force. For what is the meaning of an atonement made for the breaches of any law, if it be not this; that the law is just, equitable and

good, and that he that breaks it justly deserves to fall under its penalty, and that it is only out of mere mercy that this atonement is accepted instead of his punishment? This was the true and plain and intended meaning of the atonement made for the transgressions of the law committed by sinners.

But what shall we think of all these practical declarations, of all this show, as if the law was not only then in force, but also as if it was a most good and equitable law, entirely worthy to be obeyed in every article by man, and to be executed in every one of its penalties by God, if at the same time that law was in fact such an evil and unjust one that God had been obliged to repeal it, and set it aside as void? For if the law was repealed and made void at all, it was doubtless for some reason. But what reason could there be for repealing it, if it was in all respects an equitable and good law? It is manifest there could be none. Therefore if the law was at all repealed and made void, it undoubtedly was because it was at least in some respects evil, severe and unmerciful. But that God should require an atonement, and no less a one than the death of his own Son for the breaches of such a law, and make so public a manifestation of its goodness; and *that* after he himself had nullified it as bad, is a conception of the Deity the most gross and impious that the human mind is capable of framing. Yet such impious consequences will follow if the law was set aside in order that the present scheme of salvation might take its place; that is, if the law be made void by faith.

But perhaps it may be objected, that what we have hitherto urged, supposes that the law was repealed antecedently to the atonement's being made; whereas in truth, it was repealed and made void only afterwards, and in consideration of the atonement's having been made.

To this I would observe, that although it would seem most natural to suppose, that if the law was at all repealed in order to make way for the plan of salvation by faith in Christ, it would be done before that plan was entered upon, and so before the atonement was made; yet I am willing to allow that the law was not repealed but upon the supposition of the atonement's being already made. Now upon this supposition, either the law was made void *without* the consideration of anything done in the atonement as a motive to excite God to repeal it, or *with* some such motive on account of which he was pleased to set it aside and make it void. Either the atonement made by Christ, did in some sense prepare the way for the repeal and nullifying of the law or it did not.

If there was nothing done in the atonement with this view, and which tended to this end, and if the law was not repealed upon this account, then there is no kind of difference as to the consequences before mentioned whether the law was repealed before or after the atonement. For what reason could there be for making an atonement for the breaches of a law, which God himself knew was so evil that he must ere long repeal it, and make it void? What difference can be pointed out between making an atonement for the breaches of such a law, and one already repealed? I think it is manifest there can be none.

But if we take the *other* supposition, viz. that the law was not only repealed after the atonement was made or conceived to be made, but also on account of the atonement itself, or something done in it, in this case I beg we may carefully examine this our supposition, and perhaps, in the result, we shall find it no nearer the truth than the former.

I ask then, is it not something new and strange that an atonement should be made in order to procure the repeal of the law? On this supposition it seems the law was to be repealed and set aside, but that this was to be done only provided the law should be satisfied. But such a setting aside of a law as this is no setting of it aside at all. Besides, if the law is set aside and made void at all, so as not to be kept up in its true spirit and import, however it may be in consideration of the atonement, yet as the atonement was introduced and brought about, only as a means in order to this end, and as the end is always in view and is proposed before the means, so there must have been some reason antecedent to the consideration of the atonement, why God proposed at first to make void his law. But what reason could this be, unless that it was an evil law, and at least in some respects, not fit to be executed? No other reason is conceivable. Therefore the law of God, upon this supposition, was originally evil, unjust and cruel; and upon this account it was that God proposed to repeal it, and make it void. Yet although this was the case, God could not find it in his heart to do it, till Jesus Christ came into the world and lived a life of suffering, and died upon the cross, to excite, and persuade him to do it. Then, and not till then, God found himself willing to make void his law.

But if this was really the case, that the divine law was evil, and over-rigorous, and unjust, was not God bound of himself to make it void? What need was there of an atonement to persuade him to do this? On the other hand does not the very supposition, that God required an atonement to be made ere he would consent to nullify his law, when it *was*, and he *knew* it to

be unjust and cruel, and such as he was obliged to nullify ;—does not this supposition contain a charge of the blackest iniquity and cruelty against the ever glorious Jehovah ? Yet such is the necessary consequence of supposing that the law is made void through faith.

Let us now more particularly inquire into the consistency between our being justified by faith alone, and the law's being strictly maintained without the least abatement. The reason why these two things seem to have any mutual inconsistency, is that in the way of justification and salvation by faith the law is not executed exactly according to the letter of it. The letter of the law is, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die ;" and "the soul that sinneth it shall die." Now because the law is not executed exactly according to the letter, it may seem to some, whatever difficulties the supposition may be attended with, that it must be, and is in some degree at least abated, and made void.

To clear off this objection, and show that it is unfounded, is what I shall next attempt.

There is doubtless such a thing as a law's being maintained and kept up as to its true spirit and design, although it be not literally executed. Any law may be said to be maintained in its true spirit and design, when its authority either to restrain from the thing forbidden or excite to the thing enjoined, is as great as it ever was. But the authority of a law may doubtless thus be maintained, without in all cases an exact and literal execution of it. If for instance a law made by a prince requires, in case of its violation, that the offender be punished with a certain corporal punishment, yet doubtless this same offender may by humbling himself before his prince, by parting with his property, etc. make such satisfaction as will be as much to the honor and credit of the law, and which will as effectually support its authority, as if the law were literally executed and the offender corporally punished. If the penalty should be literally inflicted, it would be an attestation of the equity, goodness and justly binding force of the law, and so of the guilt and iniquity of its violation. But the same attestation may be made in other ways besides this of a literal execution, as in that just mentioned. The offender by humbling himself before his prince, and paying such a sum of his property as a ransom of his body, may give as great an attestation in favor of the law and of its just obligatory force, and so of his sense of his own guilt and iniquity in transgressing it, as could be given by its literal execution. In this case then the authority of the law, and its influence to restrain from the things

forbidden, and to excite to the performance of those enjoined, are as great as if it had been literally executed; and so it cannot be said in the least to be set aside, abated or made void.

If this law were set aside or made void in any one instance, it would be an encouragement to all who should be disposed to offend, to hope that it would be set aside in their case also; and thus would manifestly bring the law into disgrace and contempt. It would soon become a mere pointless weapon; and men would be very careless whether they observed or broke it. But in that instance before mentioned, where a man humbles, and acknowledges himself guilty before the prince, and justly bound by the law, and offers a ransom for his body, the authority of the law is sustained. And in this as in many cases, there may be such a ransom and such satisfaction given, as will as effectually secure the law from disgrace and contempt, as if it were exactly executed according to the letter.

It being then manifest that there is no impossibility in the nature of things in omitting the literal execution of a law, without at all setting it aside, or making it void, even in the case where it has been broken, let us now proceed to inquire what was done with regard to the divine law; whether anything proper to secure it from contempt, and support its authority.

That there was a ransom given, that there was a price paid, that an atonement or expiatory sacrifice was offered up, that a redemption, a propitiation was effected, cannot be denied. All the doubt then must be about the sufficiency, the value of the ransom, atonement or propitiation. But as to this, the sacred scriptures give abundant testimony. Thus saith God the Son to the Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;" and again, "After this Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, saith I thirst;" and again, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, it is finished." The original in these texts, variously translated "accomplished" and "finished," is the very same, and properly signifies "*completely* and *perfectly* finished," or "accomplished." Our Lord says that he had completely and perfectly finished the work which the Father had given him to do. What this work was we are informed in the context. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Here we are expressly told that God set forth Jesus Christ his son to be a propitiation

to declare his righteousness, and to prepare the way, and lay such a foundation, that God might be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; that is, to make a full and sufficient atonement for sinners. Now this work our Lord says, he has completely and perfectly finished. Therefore it is manifest that the atonement which is made for sinners, is complete, perfect and every way sufficient. Besides, how often in the scriptures is Christ called God's "beloved son in whom he is well pleased," "his dear son," "the son of his love," "his servant whom he hath chosen," "his elect in whom his soul is delighted," etc. But could God be thus pleased with his Son, thus delighted in his servant, if that son, that servant had not finished the work to which he had sent him?

Again we may argue the same from the omnipotence of God. God certainly did undertake to provide an atonement sufficient to secure the honor of his law, and preserve it from contempt. For says the prophet Isaiah, "the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify his law and make it honorable." But if God in the atonement which he has provided has not secured this end, it necessarily impeaches his omnipotence if not his omniscience also.

From these various considerations I think it is evident that there is an abundant atonement made for the breaches of God's law, even such as will effectually support its honor and authority, and therefore that the law is no more abated, or made void by the atonement, than it would have been by the literal execution of it.

But further, not only is the law not made void by the atonement but as the apostle tells us in our text, it is established. "Do we then make void the law through faith?" says he. "God forbid; yea we establish the law." He rejects the very supposition of the law's being made void through faith, or which is the same thing through the atonement and the way of salvation by it, as the greatest absurdity, as it in reality is. What can be a greater absurdity than to suppose that the law is made void and set aside, when not one of its violators is pardoned without deep repentance and full atonement? Would it be absurd to suppose that a law is made void and set aside by executing it exactly according to its letter, and after that dismissing the offender? Equally so is it to suppose that it is made void by pardoning penitent offenders when complete atonement is made. The very notion of an atonement is inconsistent with the notion of the law's being made void, as much so as the exact, literal execution of it. But as was observed, not only does the apostle reject the supposition

of the law's being made void by faith, but on the contrary expressly declares that it is established by it. This certainly is the case. Is the literal execution of a law, an establishing of its authority? Is it a practical declaration of its goodness and equity? Does it tend to create a respect and reverence for the law, to secure it from contempt, and to make its subjects believe that it is indeed a matter of importance that it should be most strictly observed? Equally so does a full atonement. This as effectually, and in some cases more effectually secures all these ends. And thus it is that through faith, so far from making void the law, we necessarily establish it.

What has been said is I apprehend sufficient to establish the first thing proposed to be shown, which was, that in the gospel way of justification by faith without the deeds of the law, the law is not made void, or in the least abated. I now proceed to the next proposed topic, which was to inquire,

II. *Wherein it appears, that the law, in this way of justification, is more effectually established, than it would have been if this way had never been adopted.*

That the law of God is more established by the present plan of salvation, than it would have been if even all mankind had perished according to the letter of the law, will be plain, I think, if we consider that the present plan of salvation is wholly founded upon the atonement of Christ. This atonement is the foundation of the whole gospel, and without it the gospel and the salvation by it would never have taken place. Now through the atonement of Christ more honor is done to the law, and consequently the law is more established, than if the law had been literally executed, and all mankind had been condemned.

Whatever tends most to the honor of the law, tends most to establish its authority. But the atonement made by the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ is a greater expression of honor to the law of God than would have been offered even by the eternal damnation of all mankind. Their eternal damnation would doubtless be a very manifest and full testimony of God, and that in the sight of both worlds, that he esteemed his law holy, just, and good; that he esteemed it an excellent and glorious law, and most worthy to be maintained in every article. What else but this could be the meaning of such a fact. Can we suppose that God would execute the threatenings of a law which he did not view in this light? Surely not; for it would be inconsistent with his glorious purity. Now although the eternal condemnation of the whole human race for the breach of the law, would be a most full and striking testimony of God, before the eyes of the whole

universe, in favor of his law and its authority, yet the atonement, by the life and death of Christ, is a testimony in its favor still more full and more striking. For by this it appears, that God so much regarded his law and set so great a value and esteem upon it, that when his own dearly beloved Son stood up and interposed in favor of sinners who had broken it, rather than make the least abatement of its claims, he poured out the dregs of the wine-cup of his wrath, without mixture of mercy, even upon him.

That God should not make an abatement of his law in order to spare one of us mortals might not seem strange. "For what is man, that is a worm, and the son of man, which is a worm?" Nay, further, that God should not set aside his law in order to spare any of the human race, but that he should hold them bound by it to suffer the punishment therein threatened till they should pay the uttermost farthing; neither ought this to seem strange and unaccountable. And if he had provided no remedy, but had suffered all mankind to walk in the ways of their own heart, and in the sight of their own eyes, till they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and if he had then condemned them to the punishment they justly deserved, and had glorified himself in their eternal ruin; even all this would have been no just matter of astonishment. For of what profit could the whole human race be to God; and what would he lose by their eternal destruction? God stands in no need of us, or any of our services. He wants not those who should worship him. He is worshipped by "an innumerable company of angels." "The chariots of the Lord," saith the psalmist, "are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels;" and saith the prophet Daniel, "Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him." What loss then could it have been to Jehovah, had none of mankind been brought to join this vast assembly? It is said in the Revelation "that the sealed servants of our God," (meaning those sealed from among men) were in all 144,000. But what are these to the innumerable company of angels, and the thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, which the sacred scriptures mention?

Now if the whole race of mortals considered in themselves, are of so small worth when compared with the angelic hosts, of how much smaller worth must they be in comparison with Jesus Christ the Son of God? He is "the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person;" "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He is God, and every way equal with God the Father; for he is one with him. As then God the Father is far more glorious, nay infinitely

more glorious, worthy and excellent than all creatures both angels and men, so also is God the Son. All nations, yea all the countless millions of creation, both men and angels united, are in comparison with him as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the dust of the balance.

Of how much more worth, then, must his sufferings be than those of all creatures together? And of how much more still than those of the human race alone? It is true his sufferings were not eternal, as those of men must have been; yet it is true also that he suffered the full punishment due to sin. He suffered till it was finished, till the work of atonement was completely accomplished, till God's wrath was appeased and his law satisfied. But certainly that a person of such glory and dignity has suffered the full punishment due to sin, is a greater honor to the law, and a more striking testimony in favor of its goodness, than if the same punishment had been suffered by any being or beings infinitely inferior in glory and dignity.

This matter may be illustrated thus. Suppose a criminal of common rank in the kingdom has been condemned for iniquitous practices, to suffer a certain corporal punishment. The prince and heir-apparent, however, entertains so strong an affection for him, that although he fully consents to the justice of the sentence, he yet cannot bear that he suffer such punishment and disgrace; and rather than either he should thus suffer, or the law by which he is condemned should be set aside, he offers himself to suffer the full punishment due to the law. Now although the judge may rightly determine, that as he is a person of vastly superior dignity, it would not be necessary to exact of him the same degree or duration of punishment; yet as he suffers the full punishment due to the law, will any one deny that it is as honorable to the law, nay much more honorable, than if the criminal himself had suffered the punishment to which he was sentenced? This illustration is indeed far from perfectly representing the thing it is brought to illustrate; and yet I apprehend, it in some measure points out to us how much more honorable to the law of God it is, that Christ has died, and has made atonement for sin, than if even all mankind had fallen under its sentence and suffered its penalty; and thus it also points out how much more the law is established through faith, than it would have been by an exact execution of it according to the letter. Having thus finished the doctrinal part of our discourse, the way is prepared to make some inferences and reflections. And,

1. From this doctrine we may infer that *it is the indispensable duty of every one inviolably to observe and perfectly to fulfil the divine law.*

To be subject to law and government, to submit to authority, and to live according to command, is a thing to which men naturally are not well disposed. The carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. It is the very nature of the carnal mind "to despise government, to be presumptuous, self-willed, and not afraid to speak evil of dignities." Especially is it opposed to the government and authority of God. It is this authority and government against which every wicked man has rebelled, and from which he has revolted; in which rebellion and revolt he persists and perseveres, as long as he perseveres in his wickedness. And according as he sees this authority and government opposed to him, according as he sees God is his enemy and is disposed to bring him to that punishment he justly deserves, in the same proportion will his heart rise and his enmity boil out against God.

And in the same proportion as the enmity of wicked men boils and rages against God himself, will it also against his law; for this is that by which they are exposed to his vengeance, that which binds them over to punishment. But however wicked men are displeased with the law, and however their enmity against it rises, and swells, and rages, they are still under its obligations. The law is still in its full force unrepealed and unabated; and consequently it is their indispensable duty inviolably to observe, and perfectly to fulfil it.

In what has just been said I would by no means be understood as if the wicked only were obliged to keep the law, and not the godly also. These latter are under equal obligations to keep the law as the former. Entire conformity to it is as much the indispensable duty of the godly, as of the ungodly. The law of God originally respected all mankind. It was not given for any particular sect, class or division of men, but was set forth as a rule of obedience to be observed by all. Now as this was the original design and intent of the law that it should extend to all, so it is manifest from our doctrine that it is still thus extensive. For by our subject it appears that the law remains the same that it ever was, in its full force and whole extent; that it is not set aside, or abated in any one respect. It is true we are not justified by the deeds of law, as we were to be under the first covenant. But the obligation of the law as a rule of life, and its ability to justify, are two very different things; and the former, viz. its obligation as a rule of life, is the very same now, with respect to all its subjects, that it ever was. Whether men are godly or ungodly, there is in this respect no difference; it is the indispensable duty of all to live in perfect obedience to the divine law;

and this appears as already said, from hence, that law still remains unrepealed and unabated.

It also further appears from God's having done so much in order to honor and magnify his law. Can that law be unworthy of our obedience, which God has judged worthy of so much honor from himself? Can it be, that it should not be our duty perfectly to observe that law, which God has judged worthy to maintain and establish by so great an atonement as that of the death of his own Son? Can that law with impunity be violated, neglected and despised by us, when rather than it should be set aside in any one instance, or suffer the least disgrace, the Son of God would die to magnify it, and make it honorable?

What greater and more emphatical, or even so great and so emphatical expression of the sense which God has of the glory of his law, could be made, as that which is made by the death of Christ, to maintain and support its honor and authority? And how could God more loudly have called upon us, cordially to submit to it, and to obey it perfectly? All the honor which it is possible for us to express to the divine law, even by our most perfect obedience, is infinitely less than the honor done it by the atonement of Christ. If then it was a fit and proper thing, that Christ should die upon the cross to do honor to the divine law, how even infinitely more proper is it, and with what infinite obligations are we bound to render it all the honor in our power, by the most perfect obedience and punctual observance on our part of all its demands?

Nor is it only our duty to keep the whole divine law, or all the particular commands of it, in some measure, or as we are apt to say, "as well as we can." Here are we not apt to deceive ourselves with the lurking opinion that under the first covenant indeed, before the fall of man, when we were in a state of innocence and free from corruption, then it was our duty to render a perfect obedience to the law of God; but that since we are fallen, and our hearts are become corrupt, and we have lost all power and ability to obey the divine law, now God does not require of us, his poor, feeble creatures, a perfect observance of his law, as that is out of our power; but that he requires only our imperfect sincere obedience; so that all the divine law now binds us to, is this imperfect sincere obedience, and nothing more is our duty.

But is this indeed so? Because God is pleased, in free grace, to accept the repenting, humble sinner returning to him through Christ, not for the sake of his imperfect obedience, but entirely for the sake of the merits of Christ, will it thence follow that

God's law requires of him no more than imperfect obedience, and that no more is his duty? And as to the excuse we make, that we cannot obey the law perfectly, will it follow that because we are so wicked and corrupt, and so fully set to do evil that we have no heart to do good, we are therefore under no obligation to cease to do evil and learn to do well? Besides, we may make the same excuse concerning all duty whatever. For it is truly the case that we have naturally no disposition, no heart to any one of the duties required of us either in the law or the gospel. Shall we then excuse ourselves from all duty whatever, by saying we cannot perform it? Do the sacred scriptures any where admit of this excuse as good and valid? Or do they undertake any where seriously to answer it, as if there were in it any force or plausibility? We read indeed of one who gave as an excuse for his not coming to the supper, that having lately married a wife he therefore could not come. But this excuse, that he *could* not come, is so far from being considered as valid and sufficient, that there is no kind of notice taken of it. The sacred scriptures just in a plain and simple manner inform us what is our duty, and require of us an immediate compliance; and in case we do not finally comply with the terms of salvation, they warn us of the fearful and certain consequence. Whether we can or cannot, that is, whether we have, or have not a heart to obey, the sacred scriptures make no difference in their claims. Comply we must, or the consequence is certain. Certainly that excuse must be frivolous and groundless, of which the sacred scriptures take no notice; and to delude ourselves with it, is, to the highest degree, vain and sinful. It is but to mock God, and cheat ourselves to ruin.

Let us then examine whether we are deceiving ourselves thus. We believe we are converted and become christians, and therefore our state is safe; why then, we may ask, need we be so very scrupulous about keeping the law? Our sins we believe are pardoned already through the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Our eternal state then being secured, whatever sins we shall hereafter commit, still we shall certainly be saved. What if we do commit this, or that, or the other sin? Christ's righteousness is abundantly sufficient to atone for them all. But what saith the apostle to this? "What shall we say then?" says he; "shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey;

whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Shall those who suppose they are made the subjects of the grace of God, thence grow bold and presumptuous in sin? Those who are indeed the subjects of this grace are under the highest, even infinite obligations to God, to show their gratitude by all possible ways of honor and respect. Shall these then, presuming upon his pardoning mercy, dishonor God by breaking and despising his law? This would be indeed to make void the law through faith; and it would prove that we are hypocrites or self-deceivers, still "in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity."

2. Another inference naturally drawn from our doctrine is, *that the evil and wickedness of every transgressor of the divine law must be exceeding great.* If Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died upon the cross to honor and magnify the law; if this law was so glorious in the eyes of God that rather than its penalties and threatenings should not be executed, he poured out the vials of his wrath upon his own Son; if nothing less than the blood of the second person in the trinity could atone for the transgressions of sinners against it: if all this is true, as is manifest from our doctrine, then it must needs be that the evil and wickedness of sin and of every transgression of the law is exceeding great. What is meant by saying the evil of sin, or transgression of a law is great, but that a great atonement is required in order to expiate that sin? But in order to expiate any transgression of the divine law, an infinite atonement was requisite. The evil then of any sin or transgression of the law must be properly infinite, and deserves an infinite punishment. If it were not infinitely great and did not deserve an infinite punishment, how could an infinite atonement have been requisite, and how could Christ have died?

But who are these who are guilty of so great wickedness. Are they some distant people, that we have merely heard of? No, my hearers, as the prophet Nathan said to David, so may we say to ourselves, "We are the men." We have been guilty of this exceeding great wickedness in sinning against God. We have broken that law which was so glorious in his eyes. We by our transgression have despised and dishonored that law which Christ died to honor. And we have exposed ourselves to the sentence of that law, which condemns to eternal destruction for every transgression. This our condition is one of deep danger; and it appears the more so because we infer from our doctrine,

3. *The entire justice of that sentence that condemns to eternal death all who transgress the law even in one instance.* This sentence is certainly just, if the punishment to which it

condemns is no more than equal to the crime. Any punishment which is only equal to the crime committed, is certainly a just punishment. But in the instance before us, every crime or sin committed against God is so great, that no atonement but the death of Jesus Christ which is an atonement of infinite worth, is sufficient to atone for it. For God never, consistently with his own glory, could have pardoned any one sin, had not Christ died. The nature then of every sin being such that it requires an infinite atonement, it must certainly justly deserve an infinite punishment, and the sentence which condemns to it, is a just, righteous and holy sentence; and were it not for the mere grace of God it would be actually executed upon every one of our race. Were it not for the mere grace of God, we should each one of us be eternally condemned for even the least transgression, and lie down forever under God's wrath. It is mere grace, and that only, which prevents it. As to justice, that lays no bar in the way, and has no plea to make in our behalf. On the contrary, it is utterly and forever against us. It vindicates the sentence, and demands its execution, and our perdition. Even the greatest saint on earth, on the footing of justice, deserves eternal condemnation. All his present holiness, and true godliness, cannot atone for even the least of all his sins. And though, through the grace of God, he shall certainly be saved, yet it is only and merely by grace. As to justice and desert, on the footing of these, he is still as much as ever exposed to the sentence of the law, and deserving of the wrath of God forever.

4. *How great and wonderful then is the grace of God by which we are saved!* How free and unmerited is it with regard even to the greatest saints! "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." That is great mercy and grace, which forgives great offences. And in proportion as the offences are greater, so is the grace which forgives them. Now the offences against God which divine grace pardons, are offences infinitely great. So that the grace of God exercised in pardoning any one, even the least of all sinners, is infinite grace. No one sinner whatever can be pardoned, not only without the exertion of free grace; but no sinner can be pardoned without the exertion of that grace which is infinitely great. Upon the whole then, with what sentiments ought our doctrine to inspire our hearts! How adorable and astonishing is the wisdom, goodness and grace of God! How glorious and amiable and excellent is the law of God! How strong is our obligation to observe and fulfil this perfectly! How great are the wickedness and guilt of every transgression! How

much ought we to humble ourselves before God, and walk before him all our days with fear and trembling, because we have thus sinned! How great glory and praise ought we to ascribe to God; and renouncing all self-dependence and self-righteousness as filthy rags, how ought we to "abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes!" Our only cry should be that of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." "Not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but to thy great name be the glory forever, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake!"

SERMON XXIV.

THE ACCEPTANCE AND SAFETY OF THE ELECT.*

ROMANS 8: 33.—"*Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?*"

ALL mankind are by nature criminals. The crime laid to their charge is nothing short of high treason against God. And not only are they criminals, charged with so black a crime, but they are convicted of it, and sentence of condemnation is actually gone forth against them. For "he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God."

This is the state of all men by nature. In the course of life, however, a vast difference in their state and character sometimes takes place. For while the generality still remain "dead in trespasses and sins," and of consequence condemned by the righteous sentence of the divine law, yet we read in the text, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" and again in the beginning of this chapter, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Thus we are taught by inspiration itself that a certain class of men, called in the text "the elect," are in so different a state from the rest of mankind, that while the latter are charged with the crime of rebellion against heaven, and high treason against the omnipotent Jehovah, the former are in a state of justification, and none can lay anything to their charge.

But here several questions naturally arise; as, Who are these elect; why can no one lay anything to their charge; how were they brought out of that state of ruin in which they with the rest of mankind were involved, into their present state so different from it; and what peculiar propriety is there in the question of the text, Who shall lay anything to their charge? To each of these things I would attend in its order.

I. *Who are the elect spoken of in the text?*

By the elect here, I conceive, we are not to understand all those

* First preached in 1774.

who are predestinated to eternal life. This and other words of the same import, are sometimes, if not generally used in the scriptures in this large extent ; as for example, in Eph. 1: 4, 5. But in our text it must be understood in a more restricted sense, as referring only to those of the elect who now appear to be such, or to those who are born again, become true penitents and believers, and consequently are pardoned, and justified, and accepted of God. These are the elect intended by the apostle, and it is manifest he did not intend any other. For concerning the rest of those who are predestinated to eternal life, it can with no propriety be asked, " Who shall lay anything to their charge ?" Nor can it be truly added, " It is God that justifieth," for he has not justified *them*. But as they remain hitherto rebellious, they are under the sentence of condemnation ; they are " condemned already, because they have not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." And while they remain in their present state, God himself lays to their charge all the sins they have ever committed; and it is only in consequence of faith in an atoning Redeemer that they can ever be delivered from the charge. We are under the necessity then of understanding the word in this restricted sense ;—for otherwise we must suppose that a man is pardoned, and justified before he repents and believes ; which is contrary to the whole doctrine of the scriptures.

By the elect therefore we are to understand true christians ; those who have been born again ; who are brought to true repentance of their sins ; who believe in Christ, and hope for salvation only through him in dependence on the Holy Spirit ; who are reconciled to God, so far as to love him supremely, to his law, so as to submit to, and obey it, and to his gospel so as to rejoice in it, and testify their regard for it by a suitable life and conversation.

Having thus shown whom we are to understand by the elect, the way is prepared to enter upon the next inquiry proposed, viz.

II. *Why can no one lay anything to their charge?*

What can be the reason of this? I answer,

1. It is not because they have *never been guilty* of any crime, or sin. If this were indeed the case it would be downright injustice to lay anything to their charge, and therefore it would be no wonder that the question of the text should be put with so much assurance. But this is far from being the case, as we have just now shown. They by nature are equally depraved with the rest of mankind. And not only so, but before their conversion they may have been as bad by practice as any. In the scriptures we read of Mary Magdalene out of whom our Lord cast

seven devils. Yet she afterwards became one of God's elect, in the sense before described. Then we read also of Saul the persecutor, who breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the christian church, being exceedingly mad against it, and who yet afterwards became a chosen messenger of mercy to convey the name of God to the Gentiles. We have, too, a remarkable testimony of the apostle Paul, very pertinent to our present purpose, in 1 Cor. 6: 9, etc., "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." And as this had been the character of some of the Corinthian converts, so it may be the character of others in the present, or any other age of the church, who yet may afterwards become the true disciples of Christ, and with the greatest truth and propriety be reckoned among the elect of God. And all believers have doubtless many actual transgressions, as well as their original sin, which might justly be laid to their charge. The reason therefore of asking the question in the text cannot be that they have never been guilty of any crimes, or contracted any guilt. Nor is it,

2. This, that although they had formerly been guilty of sins, yet they are *not guilty of any now*, since their conversion; so that whatever may have been the case with them formerly, nothing can now be justly laid to their charge. This I say, is not the reason of the question in the text. No; for upon a little examination we shall find that this is as far from the truth, as that they have never committed any sin. The sacred scriptures tell us "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not;" and again, "in many things we offend all;" that is, "we all offend;" and again, "Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am free from my sins?" and still again, "if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." By all these passages of scripture it appears that even the best of men are not clear of sin, but that they daily offend in thought, word or deed, or perhaps in all these. There is therefore sufficient matter of charge against the christian, not only upon the footing of his former sins, committed before his conversion, but upon the footing of those which have been committed since, and are daily committed by him in the continual course of his life. Again, I observe,

3. That the reason why nothing is to be laid to the christian's

charge is not that he *does not deserve* that his sins should be charged against him, and to be condemned for them. This seems to be the vain conceit of some. They seem to imagine that the believer, since he is become a believer, no longer deserves that his sins should be charged to his account, or he be at all punished for them. But let us consider the consequences of such a supposition. It is evidently this, that the pardon, the justification of the believer is not an act of mercy but of justice. Surely if a man do not deserve punishment, it is no act of grace to let him go free of punishment. He is not a sinner, but a just, and righteous person; and to acquit and justify such a one is no act of grace, but an act of justice which he may demand as a debt. Now to suppose this in the case of the believer's justification, is to overthrow entirely the grace of that justification, and to put him upon the footing of the covenant of works. But how ill does it become us thus to frustrate the grace of God!

True it is that God has bound himself, by his immutable promise, to forgive and justify the sinner immediately upon his believing. But both this promise itself, and the fulfilment of it are not of debt, but of mere grace. The reason therefore why nothing is to be laid to the charge of the believer, is not that he does not deserve it. Upon the footing of law and justice he has no right to any blessing; and yet upon the footing of grace, and by the promise of the gospel, he has a right to all blessings.

The truth is, the sins of the believer not only deserve the same condemnation, as those of other men; but in some respects they have a peculiar demerit, and are more vile, and ill-deserving than those of others. His sins are committed with some peculiar aggravations. It is a true maxim, that the more light a man has, and the greater the mercy against which he sins, the more aggravated is his guilt. Now for both these reasons the sins of the believer, are sins of peculiar aggravation. For in the first place he is favored with much *greater light* than other men. "The God of this world hath blinded the minds" of all "those which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." But "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into the heart of the believer, to give him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." He is enlightened to see the true character of God, and his obligation to love and serve him; the glory of the law, and his obligation to obey it; the glory of Jesus Christ, and his obligation to believe on him. Whereas the sinner is naturally blind to all these things, and never does see the true spiritual glory of them till he is enlightened of God in regeneration. And

as the believer has so much more light than the unbeliever, so in this respect his sins are attended with a peculiar aggravation.

They are also peculiarly aggravated for the other reason mentioned, viz. they are committed against *greater mercy* than those of others. The believer has not only been favored with the common mercies of life, and the ordinary means of grace; but he has tasted that the Lord is gracious; he is made the subject of the saving grace of God, so that he is pardoned, and justified, and is admitted into a peculiar relation to God, even to the relation of a child. Now for a child to rise up in rebellion against his father, especially when that father has been peculiarly kind to him, has forgiven him many former acts of rebellion, and has bestowed upon him many inestimable and eternal blessings; I say for a child under those circumstances to rebel against his parent, would be an act of very aggravated wickedness indeed. And yet this is the very case of the believer, in all the sins he commits after his conversion.

But if none of these are the reasons why the believer can have no charge brought against him, what, I may be asked, is the reason? This question I shall now endeavor directly to answer.

The reason is *that he believes in Christ.* The constitution of the gospel is this, that whosoever believes in Christ shall be pardoned and justified, and no charge brought against him shall be of any avail to procure his condemnation. God has settled this constitution from the respect he has to his own Son, and to his complete and infinitely glorious righteousness. Such is his love to his Son and his well pleasedness in him, that as soon as the sinner believes in him, that is, as soon as he is reconciled to him, accepts him as his Savior, and in this view depends on him, God immediately pardons all his sins however great and many they may have been, and entitles him to heaven and all its invaluable blessings.

An earthly parent may have such an affection for one of his sons, who is very dutiful and obedient as to pardon another rebellious child who pleads his brother's goodness, and for whom that brother intercedes. And this the father does, not out of any respect to, or well-pleasedness in this rebellious child; but merely because he is well pleased with the duty and obedience of the other who intercedes for him. In like manner a king on account of the intercession of a very good and dutiful subject, may be pleased to forgive a rebel. And so God for Christ's sake pardons, and justifies the greatest sinner, who believes on him, as the only intercessor and redeemer.

Now God having in this way justified the sinner, none can lay

anything to his charge. Though he really deserves that all his sins should be charged to his account, both those committed before conversion and those after, yet God having once justified him, all his sins are cast behind his back, and are buried as in the depths of the sea. They are as though they had not been. They can never be charged to his account either in this world or in the world to come.

We come now to the next question upon the text, which is,

III. *How are true christians brought out of the state in which they with the rest of mankind are involved in one common ruin, into their present state which is so different from it?*

What is the cause of this great difference? We have already shown that the sins of the believer are freely forgiven in consequence of faith. But how does it come to pass that they believe while others do not?

In the acts of the apostles we read that "some believed and some believed not;" and again that "the election obtained, and the rest were blinded." Now whence does this difference arise? Not from the superior, natural goodness of some above others; for all men by nature are "dead in trespasses and sins." "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." No one is more inclined by nature to repent, return to God, and believe on Christ than another. And in vain shall any one expect of himself, without the aid of supernatural grace, to rise from his spiritual sloth to a life of true holiness. As soon might we have expected that our Lord Jesus Christ would have risen from the grave without a divine agency. And this is the very example which the apostle Paul brings to illustrate the subject now before us in Eph. 1: 18, 19, 20, "That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places." It is true indeed, there is this remarkable difference between the similitude, and the thing it is brought to illustrate; that a dead corpse is not a moral agent, and consequently cannot be made the subject of either praise or blame. Though it continue in its present state, no blame is to be ascribed to it. Or if it be raised from the dead it deserves no praise. But the case is quite otherwise with the soul which is dead in a spiritual sense. This very state of death is a state of sin, and so long as the soul continues in this state, it continues in a state of sin; and surely sin, in the very idea of it, is blamable and ill-deserving. The soul therefore deserves the punishment threatened against all sin, that is eternal condemnation, for continuing though it be but for one hour, in its natural state of spiritual death.

On the other hand whenever it revives from this state, however the divine power is exerted in order to this effect, yet because it is made willing in the day of God's power, and so in reviving is active as well as passive, therefore the spiritual reviving of such a soul is an amiable act of true holiness.

Upon the whole it is only in consequence of the sovereign, distinguishing grace of God bestowed in regeneration, only through the agency of the Holy Spirit that any of mankind become believers, and consequently are delivered from the charge of sin and the condemnation of the law. God maketh us to differ one from another. And being once reconciled to him in regeneration, we are of course reconciled to his Son, and so cordially receive him in true faith, to be our Savior.

The last proposed inquiry still remaining to be considered is,

IV. *What peculiar propriety is there in the question of the text, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"*

To this query I answer, that it seems in part to consist in this, that it is even a more strong negation of the thing inquired than if it had been simply denied. It is as if the apostle had said, "Who will be so daring, as when God justifies, to undertake to condemn, or to lay anything to the charge of the elect?" It is so plain a case that even the most audaciously wicked will not adventure to do it.

Again, it is observable that the interrogative "who" seems to be emphatical. "*Who* shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Shall God? No; it is he that justifies them. Shall Christ? No; it is he that died for them. Shall the angels in glory? No; there is joy in heaven among them when even a single sinner repents, and is justified. Shall the saints in heaven or upon earth? No; these are the very elect, and surely will never reject the justifying grace of God against themselves. Shall the devils and wicked men do it? Alas! what charge can they exhibit which will not fall even with greater weight upon themselves? No! however desirous they may be of bringing others into the same place of torment with themselves, yet even these envious and wicked spirits will be so convinced of the irreversibility of the decree of justification that is gone forth in favor of the elect, that they will not attempt to exhibit any charge against them. Whom God loves he loves unto the end, and nothing shall be able to separate them from his love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Thus I have endeavored to answer the several queries suggested by our text; have endeavored to show whom we are to understand by "the elect" spoken of in it; why no one can lay anything

to their charge; how they are brought into this state so different from that of the rest of mankind, and what peculiar propriety there is in the question of the text respecting them.

In the improvement of the subject, I remark,

1. We may observe that although this doctrine ascribes the justification of the sinner wholly to free grace, yet *it does not open any door to licentiousness.* The only way in which it can be supposed to open such a door, is by encouraging sinners to imagine that they may be justified though they continue in sin. But this doctrine gives no occasion for such an imagination. No man ever will be justified who continues in impenitence and unbelief. Justification is obtained only in consequence of repentance and faith; and upon the condition of repentance and faith, any, even the vilest sinner in the world shall be justified. Therefore while there is the greatest encouragement for sinners to repent and lead a holy life, it is absolute ruin for them to remain impenitent. So that although God of his sovereign grace makes some willing in the day of his power to comply with the terms of the gospel, and sometimes bestows this grace on some of the greatest sinners; yet this is no encouragement for any to continue in sin; for though there is abundant assurance given of mercy and salvation in case of repentance and faith; yet without these there is no possibility of obtaining salvation.

2. Hence we may see *how God has maintained all his perfections, and glorified his whole character in the gospel.* The Psalmist, under a spirit of prophecy, foreseeing the state of things under the gospel cries out, "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." These at first view seem to be inconsistent and jarring attributes. Mercy calls for the salvation of the sinner; while truth demands his condemnation agreeably to the original divine threatening. So righteousness requires that the law of God be maintained in its full force, and that its honor be not in the least abased. But on the other hand peace calls for reconciliation between God and man. Now how shall all these things be brought to pass? However difficult this may seem, they are all accomplished in the gospel. The calls of mercy and peace are fully answered, as through Christ reconciliation takes place and salvation is bestowed upon the sinner. Yet the requirements of truth and righteousness are fully secured, as the threatening of God is executed upon our substitute, and as he hath "magnified the law and made it honorable." So that now "God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus."

3. From what has been said, we may also learn *how much*

reason we have to humble ourselves before God. This is a duty incumbent upon all, both saints and sinners, believers and unbelievers. Doubtless those who have all their lives long unto this time, been guilty of neglecting and transgressing the divine law, of hating and rebelling against God, of despising and rejecting his Son, the only Savior; doubtless those who still persevere in their sins have reason to humble themselves for them before God, to confess and bewail them, and to do no more so wickedly. And the same is true with regard to true christians. However they have repented of their sins, and have begun to walk in newness of life, yet they have great reason to humble themselves before God for their daily short comings, for all their sins committed against so many strong and peculiar obligations as they are laid under. Humility is the proper character of the christian; it is a grace which very specially becomes him.

4. *How loudly are the elect called to the exercise of gratitude.* The bestowment of kindness implies an obligation to gratitude, and that greater or less according to the greater or less good or kindness bestowed. But there can be no greater good bestowed in the world than justification and a title to eternal life. And such is the good bestowed on the christian. In comparison with this good, riches and honor, provinces, kingdoms and empires are nothing. If then, any common civilities and kindness between neighbors demand gratitude, how much more, may I not say infinitely more is it demanded by this invaluable gift bestowed upon every true christian.

5. *What reason there is that sinners should accept the offers of life which are fully made to them in the gospel.* There cannot be a good proposed more worthy of the acceptance of the sinner. He is therefore not only bound in gratitude to accept it, but if he does not accept it he is guilty of the greatest sin. You may reject houses and lands, honors and titles, thrones and kingdoms, and be blameless. But you cannot reject Christ and heaven, without being guilty of the darkest wickedness, and exposing yourselves to the severest vengeance of an angry God. For he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned; and while to the penitent and believing God is a refuge, to the impenitent and the unbelieving he "is a consuming fire."

SERMON XXV.

GRACE EVIDENCED BY ITS FRUITS.*

MATTHEW 5: 15.—*Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

THESE words are a part of Christ's sermon on the mount, which was addressed particularly to his disciples. "Ye," says he, "are the salt of the earth," But who? The whole crowd that followed him into the mountain? And again, "Ye are the light of the world." Who? All those multitudes that followed from Galilee, and Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and from beyond Jordan? No; but his *disciples;* who all professed to be, and who all, except one, actually were his true and faithful followers. These were the light of the world, and these were a city set on a hill that could not be hid.

Thus our Lord compares his disciples to a light, and calls them the light of the world; and under this similitude he proceeds to draw the character of his *true* disciples, and to tell the twelve apostles what they must be if they would be such. "Neither do men light a candle," says he, "and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." As if he had said, "As I just told you, you are a light, even the light of the world. But what is the use of a light, of a candle for instance, and with what design do men light it? Is it that they may put it under a bushel, and there keep it concealed from the view of all spectators? No; quite the reverse. You all know that the use of a candle is to give light to those who are in the house, and that this is the very end for which it is enkindled. Therefore as you are the light of the world, it behoves you, as you would ever appear in character, or appear what you profess to be, to cause your light to shine before men; so to shine that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

There are two things especially taught in our text: 1. The nature of the principle of grace in the hearts of believers. Believers

* First preached in 1769.

are here compared to a light, or to a candle. And they are compared to this because they are believers, or because they are endowed with a principle of divine grace. It is on account of this principle that it is proper to compare them to a light. But it is the nature of a light, or of a candle to render itself visible; to shed abroad a bright shining splendor, which cannot but be taken notice of by all who are in proper circumstances to observe it. And as christians, on account of the principle of grace which is in them, are compared to a light or candle, we are thus plainly taught that it is the very nature of this principle in the heart to render itself visible to all who are about us, and in circumstances to observe it. 2. We are also taught in these words, what is the end for which this principle of divine grace is implanted in the hearts of believers. Christ tells us expressly that it is the same as that for which men light a candle, viz. that it may give light and thus be of service; that men may see their good works and thus be led to glorify their Father which is in heaven. Hence we have, then, the following doctrine:

That it is the nature and tendency of the principle of divine grace, and also the end for which it is communicated, to render itself manifest in holy practice. In discoursing on this doctrine I shall endeavor 1. To show that this is the nature and tendency of the principle of divine grace; and 2. To illustrate this truth, in the case of the several particular graces.

I. *I would show that it is the nature and tendency of the principle of divine grace in the heart to manifest itself in holy practice.*

This will abundantly appear if we consider the representations which the scriptures give of this principle. They speak of it under a variety of names and views, some of which I shall now lay before you; and by which it will appear that a principle of grace is a lively, active principle that tends directly to operate, and manifest itself in holy practice.

In the first place, this principle of divine grace is in scripture called the *divine nature.* 2 Pet. 1: 4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the *divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Inasmuch then as the principle of grace is called the "divine nature," it must in some respect, at least, *resemble* the divine nature. But what is this; or what is the nature of God? Is it not all life, all activity, all energy and power? Is it not at the furthest possible remove from everything dull, sluggish and inactive? Surely it is. And if a principle of grace is anything like it, it must be a principle

immediately tending to exert itself in life and practice. Besides, from this same representation of the principle of grace, we not only learn that it tends to practice and exertion in general, but we also learn to what particular practice it tends. For being something like the divine nature itself, it doubtless tends to exert itself in the same way that that does. But how is that? Are not God's ways righteousness, and his paths holiness? And is it not the very tendency of the divine nature to exert itself in acts of holiness, and in those only; or to maintain one continued course of holy practice? If so, we may safely conclude that that principle which the holy Spirit has seen fit to denominate the *divine nature*, has a tendency to the same kind of exertion and practice. I would just observe further, that from the representation of the nature of grace, it appears that it has a native tendency so to exert itself in holy practice, as to manifest itself very visibly to the view of those who are about us. This we know is the proper tendency of the divine nature itself, and that it actually has this effect. Have not all God's attributes, especially his holiness and purity, been abundantly exhibited to the view of the world in the works of creation and providence, and in his written revelation? If so, then the like tendency also has the principle of divine grace in the hearts of believers.

Again, the scriptures also represent the principle of divine grace in the hearts of believers to be *the image of Christ*. Col. 3: 10, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him;" that is, of Christ. Yea, it is further represented to be *Christ himself living in us*. Gal. 2: 20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Now if a principle of grace is properly called the image of Christ; yea, Christ himself living in us; it must needs have some resemblance to the character of Jesus Christ, in its nature and tendency. But what was his character? What was the temper and spirit of his mind? Did not he live in the practice of holiness, as well as profess it? Did not his whole life savor of it, and did it not abundantly manifest itself in all his conversation? Did not his light truly so shine before men, that they might see his good works, and glorify his Father who was in heaven? The holiness and spirit of piety in Christ did not lie concealed in his heart, but it come out in his conduct; in every part of his conduct, and on all occasions manifested itself to the view of others. And so a principle of true grace tends to the same in every one who is indeed possessed of it.

Again, the scriptures call a principle of grace by the name of *a seed*. 1 John 3: 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit

sin, for *his seed* remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God." And as it is compared to a seed, so we may doubtless judge of its nature by the nature of a seed. And what is the nature of this? Is it an ever dead and lifeless thing, which lies always concealed in the ground and never manifests itself by its fruits and product? How far otherwise! You all well know that it is the nature of a seed to grow, to spring up out of the ground in which it was sown, and to produce a living plant or tree, and finally fruit, both of which are visible, and standing proofs of the goodness of the seed itself. Now as the holy scripture compares a principle of grace to this, so it herein teaches us that it is the nature and tendency of a principle of grace, not to lie concealed in the heart, as though it were dead, but to produce such fruit in our practice as shall be a clear proof of its existence within us. Otherwise there would be no propriety in comparing it to a seed; and the comparison would not tend to instruct but to deceive us, and to give a wrong notion of the nature of a principle of grace.

Again, another thing to which a principle of true grace is compared in scripture is *fire*. Matt. 3: 11, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." And when the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, it was in the appearance of fire. Acts 2: 3, 4, "And then there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." And Isaiah 42: 3, "The smoking flax shall he not quench." Here the same thing is compared to a very small fire, or to a fire just beginning, which does not yet blaze, but has just begun to smoke. But what is the nature and tendency of fire? Is it to be hid and concealed, and never show itself by any effects? No; quite the reverse. We all know it is a most powerful element and always alive, and always in the actual exercise of its power. This liveliness is essential to its very existence; and it manifests itself in two ways. First it renders it visible, or manifest to the sense of seeing. It naturally exhibits a bright shining light, which cannot but be seen by all who are in proper circumstances to observe it; and in this it agrees with that to which true grace is compared in our text. It also renders itself manifest to the sense of feeling, and the nearer we approach to it and the more we are conversant with it, the more plainly does it manifest itself in both of these ways. Now to this element of fire, is a principle of true grace compared in scripture; and does not this plainly teach us the nature of such

grace? Does it not hence appear to be of a lively, vigorous and active nature, always tending to render itself manifest by its proper fruits and effects in holy practice? It doubtless does.

Again, the scriptures compare a principle of divine grace to *precious ointment.* 1 John 2: 20, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things;" and verse 27, "But the anointing which ye have received abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." But precious ointment is wont to render itself manifest and observable, by the agreeable odor and sweet smell which it sends forth; and with which those who smell it are wont to be charmed and delighted. In this it affords a proper illustration of the nature of true grace in the heart. This also is wont to spread abroad its visible fruits and effects in the life and practice of holiness—a life which is pleasing and acceptable to God.

Again, the scriptures compare a principle of true grace to a *spring of living water.* John 4: 14, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Now you all know that such a spring or fountain of water is, not a hidden, covert thing, which, as to any visible effects is entirely concealed. On the contrary it flows forth, and produces a permanent stream which is a standing evidence of its real existence. And so it is with the principle of true grace. The nature of this also is to manifest itself in a continued series of visible and gracious fruits in the life.

Again; a principle of divine grace is called by the name of *spirit.* John 3: 6, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit;" and Rom. 8: 4, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." But what is there of a more lively active nature, and what is more disinclined to any dullness or inactivity than a spirit? Nothing in existence. And so it is with a principle of divine grace. This also is of the same lively and active nature. And all dullness or sluggishness is entirely foreign from it. And as spirit is of such an active nature, it will so far as it prevails in any man, display itself by its fruits in his life and conduct. And these fruits we have a right to look for and to expect from those who profess to be possessed of the principle. And so far as we see the manifest fruits of grace, so far we are bound to believe that there is the principle. But so far as we see that they are wanting, so far we have a right to

suspend our judgment and withhold our charity. This is perfectly agreeable to our manner of judging in the affairs of common life. Whenever we see a neighbor, in all his conduct busy and active and producing evident marks and effects of his activity in all that he undertakes, we immediately judge that such a one is not a lazy, indolent man; but that he is possessed of an active spirit; in other words that he has the principle of activity within. But if we can find no fruits and effects of a man's diligence and activity, then however he may profess to be diligent and active, we rightly judge him to be dull and indolent. So unless we see those who profess to be gracious, living according to their profession and exhibiting the proper fruits of grace in their lives and conduct, we cannot believe that they really have grace in their hearts.

I would only observe further under this head, that the nature of a principle of true grace is also manifest by what is said in 2 Tim. 3: 5, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Here the apostle seems to call true grace by the name of *the power of godliness*; by which at least we are taught that it is a powerful thing, and that its nature and tendency are, to produce remarkable effects in all in whom it is implanted. Thus it may appear that there is abundant evidence from the scripture account of a principle of divine grace, that its nature and tendency are to operate in the life and practice, and by means of its holy fruits, to manifest itself to the view of others.

We may now consider this doctrine,

II. *With reference to several of the principal graces in particular, and endeavor to show that their nature and tendency are the same, viz. to holy practice.* Here I observe,

1. That this is the nature and tendency of that great christian grace *faith*. Faith in its proper and scriptural sense, is a cordial belief of the truth, or a reception of the truth of the gospel and of God's word in general, with the full approbation of the heart. And in this general notion of faith are included especially two things:

(1) A firm persuasion and full conviction of the truth and reality of the great doctrines revealed in God's word. Now this persuasion and conviction most certainly tend directly to practice, because these truths deeply concern our interest and affect our happiness or misery. If they are real truths our happiness or misery is greatly dependent upon them. And if we really believe them to be true, what a powerful tendency will they have so to put us upon practice, that we may if possible secure the one and avoid the other. And the general reason why man-

kind in general are no more influenced in their practice by the truths of God's word, is, because in reality they do not realize them, or in a realizing manner believe them to be truths. Did they but do this, somehow they would be greatly influenced in their practice. They would at least be filled with concern and anxiety, so as to break off from their open wickedness, and be all attention to their miserable estate and to the duty which God requires of them. This we find to be the case with mankind in the common concerns of this life. Whenever they really believe, that is, have a realizing sense that a given course of conduct is greatly for their interest, and that its omission will certainly terminate in their exceeding great loss, dishonor and shame, they are at least filled with concern and anxiety about the matter. And if in any such case they are not, we scruple not to believe and affirm that they have no realizing sense of the things which concern their interest. Now the same thing holds good in the affairs of religion. If men really believed and had a realizing sense that there is an eternal and infinitely good God, who is the creator and ruler of the world, and takes strict notice of all the conduct of his rational creatures; if they were fully convinced that they are in the hands of God who is angry with them, and are daily exposed to his wrath; if they were firmly persuaded that there is an eternal world of endless joy or misery just before them, upon which they must shortly enter, and that there is no way of escaping eternal ruin but by flying to Jesus Christ who offers himself to become a Savior to all who will accept of him; I say if men really believed these things, what could tend more to influence them in their practice and conduct?

(2) There is also contained in true saving faith, a consent and warm approbation of the heart of the things believed. And this united with the forementioned conviction of the judgment, the whole becomes a principle still more practical, and still more binding to influence the life and conversation. The true saint not only believes that there is a future state of rewards and punishments, but he also rejoices in it; is charmed with the prospect of the happiness of heaven, and fully acquiesces in the justice of the torments of hell. He not only believes that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh and is the Savior of the world, but also rejoices in him, in this character, and his soul receives him as his Savior, and thus becomes united to him. Now such a faith as this more especially tends to practice in two respects. In the first place, it sweeps away all those objections and stumbling blocks which are in the way of others, and which tend to weaken their belief of the truths of the gospel. Men who have no cordial consent to the truth,

but whose hearts wholly oppose it, are continually raising objections against it. And by this means they frequently persuade themselves into the disbelief of it; at least they render it less practical to themselves, and are much less influenced by it in their conduct. But a true saving belief of the truth sweeps away all these objections, and receives the truth in all its practical power and efficacy. Again, true faith more especially tends to practice, as it tends to fix our attention upon the truths believed. If we cordially consent to any truth we shall delight in attending to it, and in meditating upon it, and shall actually have it very much in our thoughts. But if our hearts are opposed to any truth, even though we do believe it, yet we shall endeavor to divert our attention from fixing and dwelling upon it. In true faith again, there is not only a cordial reception of the truths of the gospel in general, but in particular of Jesus Christ, and an acquiescence in him as our Lord and Savior. And to receive him as our Savior is to receive him as our Savior from sin; for this is the view in which he offers himself to us. But no one will receive a Savior from sin, until he is disposed and really desires to be delivered from it. Why should he fly to Christ to deliver him from that, from which he really desires not to be delivered, but which he eagerly clings to and embraces? But when a person is really sick of sin, weary and heavy laden with it, *then* and not till *then* he is prepared to receive a deliverer from it, and he is also at the same time prepared henceforth to forsake it. And such a disposition of mind as he now has, tends abundantly to his actually forsaking it in life and practice. The same also may be observed of receiving him as our Lord and King. If we do really receive him cordially and willingly as our Lord and Master, we shall willingly submit to his authority, and obey his commands.

2. The same also is the nature and tendency of true *trust and reliance upon God.* This is a grace which is much insisted on in the scriptures, especially in the Old Testament, and it is greatly inculcated as an important duty. And doubtless if we do really confide in and rely upon God, and make him the object of our hope and trust, we shall in our practice be governed by this principle. Its tendency will be to make us still rely upon him in the midst of darkness and the frowns of providence. The covenanting people of God profess to trust in him and to rely upon him as their supreme good and best portion. And as they make such a profession, so God frequently in the course of his providence sees fit to try them, whether the profession which they make be true and sincere. For this purpose he cuts off their hope in

other objects, and disappoints their trust, and brings them into great trouble and affliction. Now in such circumstances the tendency of a false trust in God is to leave us to murmuring against God and finally to throw us into despair. But the trust which is true and genuine will still support us, will make us patient and submissive, and will lead us to conduct as if our all were not lost. For if God be indeed our supreme good, and we are sure he lives, whatever else we are deprived of, we shall be indifferent about it. Perfectly agreeable to this is the exhortation, Is. 50: 10, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." A gracious trust in God will also tend greatly to influence our practice as it will make us willing to trust him with our earthly substance when he calls for it. We are not afraid to commit our earthly substance into the hands of those of our neighbors in whom we have full confidence that they will deal faithfully with it, and duly repay it to us. How then, if we have any trust in God, shall we be unwilling to commit the same to him, when he has promised abundantly to reward us both here and hereafter?

3. The same also is the tendency of that capital christian grace *true love to God.* Love is eminently a practical principle, towards what ever object it be directed. What else is it but love exercised towards various objects and in various shapes and degrees, which governs the whole world of mankind? Whatever a man loves and sets his heart upon, that in proportion to the degree of his love, he pursues in his practice. For instance, those who set their hearts on riches how do they conduct as to their practice? Are they all engaged after other things, at the same time neglecting all opportunities of acquiring the wealth which they so much love? Is this the way with men of this character? It is well known to be far otherwise. It is well known that they keep their eyes still fixed upon the one object of their pursuit, and so regulate all their conduct as tends most to secure the grand thing at which they are aiming. So also if men set their hearts upon honor; then we shall find them so regulating their conduct as if possible to obtain this. Or if they very tenderly love their friends or their near relations; in this case we shall find their conduct to be influenced in favor of those whom they love, in proportion to the degree of their love.

Now the same is the natural effect and tendency of true love to God. It will excite us in our life and practice to express our love. True love to God is always supreme. And if we love God supremely, that is, more than all things else, it will tend to

that practice whereby we shall express this supreme love. All our conduct will have an ultimate respect to God, to his service, and to his honor and glory. If we love God, we shall certainly love his laws; for these are an expression of his mind and will. And if we love his laws, we shall love to practise them; for they all respect practice and strictly enjoin it. John 14: 15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and verse 21, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." And the same thing is abundantly insisted on throughout the scriptures, as the grand mark by which we both know concerning ourselves and others, whether we have any true love to God.

Of love there are various kinds, or rather it is exercised in a variety of ways which are distinguished by several names. One exercise of love is *esteem*, whereby we prefer God and choose him before all things else. And if we have this esteem of God it will tend to manifest itself when other things come in competition with him. When it comes to this that we must either have our God or the world, our God or our honor, our God or our pleasure and ease, we shall readily choose the former, and reject the latter. Another exercise of true love to God is *desire*. Those that really love God, desire to know more and more of him in order that they may love him more and more. They desire also to be more and more conformed to him. This is expressed in that benediction of our Lord, "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness." This is the true character of all who sincerely love God. Now strong desire is a powerful principle of action and practice. Another exercise of true love to God is *joy* and *delight* in him. This also is most manifestly a powerful principle tending to influence the life and practice.

4. I come now to consider that particular christian grace which in the scriptures is called by the name of *repentance*. This is a grace of which some christians seem to make very little account. Yea, they hardly esteem it a grace at all to be exercised by christians, but only to be exercised by unrenewed sinners. But quite contrarily to this we read in scripture, of "repentance for the remission of sins," "repentance unto life," "sorrowing after a godly manner;" which expressions surely mean something not to be found in carnal sinners. This repentance consists in a real hatred and abhorrence of all sin, or a turning of the mind from it. The word in the New Testament which is most frequently translated repentance, most properly signifies a change of mind. But when the mind is changed from one thing upon which it was be-

fore fixed to another, the practice is wont also to be changed. But in this case the mind is changed or turned from *sin*. Sin is the grand object upon which the minds of natural men are fixed. But in repentance they are drawn off from this, and are fixed upon quite a contrary object, viz. holiness. And doubtless such a change of mind has a most direct tendency to a like change in practice. We find it to be so in all other cases. Suppose a man who has hitherto been pursuing a certain course, now has his mind with respect to that course entirely changed; what will be the effect? Will he still go on pursuing the same course? Universal experience demonstrates the contrary, viz. that henceforth he will desist from it. The same is true of a change of the mind from sin. If the mind be turned, why should not the man forsake it in practice? How can it be otherwise? We are by no means wont to run greedily on in the practice of that which our minds hate and abhor.

5. I would also consider the christian grace of *humility*. This tends to a humble walk and conversation; and whoever is possessed of it, will be led to express it in all his conduct towards others. Humility is a thing so much inculcated and so peculiarly suited to the christian dispensation, that all professing christians hold to it and endeavor the most of them to make a show of it. But some are much put to it even to put on any tolerable semblance of it. But where there is a humble spiri twithin, there a humble behavior is natural and easy. We find that men of a proud and haughty spirit are very apt to express their pride in their outward conduct. And why should not men of a humble spirit be as likely in the same way to express their humility? A truly humble spirit will also tend to express itself in contentment in the circumstances allotted to us by providence; and not only so but also to rejoice in the prosperity of others.

6. The next grace that I would mention is *love to men*. This is ever connected with love to God, and like that will flow out in holy practice. It will lead us to assist our fellow men when in difficulty, to compassionate them when in suffering, and to oblige them in all possible things. "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food," it will lead us not merely to say to them, "depart in peace, and be ye warmed and filled," but "to give them those things which are needful for the body." It will lead us to suffer long and be kind, to forgive others as we would be forgiven by our heavenly father. And whatever may be our professions, if they are not thus sustained and their sincerity evidenced by these and all kindred fruits, we are but deceiving ourselves.

7. The same remarks apply to the christian grace of *gratitude*. We cannot indeed profit God by our thankfulness, and yet we may express that thankfulness by our holy obedience. The very sense of God's mercies, will lead us, from a grateful and affectionate feeling, to endeavor to obey him, because thus we know he is pleased and glorified. As the subject who has been most highly favored by his prince, can and will find ways to show his thankfulness, so it will be with the christian to whom God has shown the greatest conceivable favors.

8. Equally true is all this of the christian grace of *hope*. This tends to wean us from the world, for it is always pointing us forward to another state of existence. If we have true hope, it will fix our desires and expectations on the great subjects of the promises. It will lead us to look for our highest good hereafter, and as a consequence to think but lightly of the things of this world, and to live as pilgrims and strangers here. It will lead us also to lay up our treasure in heaven, and to live and act as really believing it to be there. And if we thus live by faith, and as having our conversation in heaven, this surely is holy practice.

Thus I have in some measure finished what was proposed, viz. have shown that it is the nature and tendency of divine grace to manifest itself in holy practice, and that the same is true of each particular one of the christian graces, individually considered. In the improvement of the subject, it may be remarked,

1. By way of *instruction*, that we may see the reason why religion is so much dishonored by the disorderly walk of professors. It is because it is so eminently a practical thing, and known to be so by all. But if they see those who profess this religion not practising accordingly, they are ready to believe there is nothing in it, or at least that there is nothing in their profession. And, indeed, what else could be expected? And by what else beside actions can man judge? How important then that "every one that nameth the name of Christ should depart from all iniquity," and "shun the very appearance of evil," and seek in all things to walk worthy of the christian vocation!

2. In the use of *examination*, let us ask, in view of this subject, what have been our lives? Many of us have made a profession of religion, have told of a great change of our sentiments and feelings, and of new and perhaps extraordinary views of God and Christ, of the grace of the gospel, of the joys of heaven and the torments of hell. But have we lived accordingly? Have we lived in obedience to God, in faith on Christ, in the purifying hope of the gospel, and as realizing the blessed and fearful realities of the unseen world? And not only toward God, b u

ward our fellow men, have we lived answerably to the great change we profess to have experienced? We are all doubtless sensible that we come short in these things. But are we contented to come short, flattering ourselves that we are christians, and therefore resolving to hope at any rate, no matter what may be our conduct? This ought not to be; for this is not the nature of true grace. True grace, in all our short-comings, will be attended by four things which may evidence its sincerity. If we indeed possess it,

(1) We shall at least be desirous of being holy. Some do not desire to be holy. The safety of the christian they desire, but they care not for his holiness. But if we are true christians we shall eagerly desire to be holy. We shall strive for holiness, using to this end all the means of grace, working out our salvation with fear and trembling.

(2) We shall be grieved that we come short of perfect and entire obedience and holiness. The spirit will ever be working against the flesh. It will be our grief and burden that we so often sin against God. And with the apostle we shall often be ready to cry out, "O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death."

(3) We shall ever feel our dependence on the Holy Spirit, and lie low at the throne of grace asking for divine strength. At the throne of grace we shall feel is our proper place; and the more we see our own deficiencies and weakness, the more constantly and humbly shall we cast ourselves on God for assistance, and for grace to help in every time of need.

(4) We shall make progress. If we are truly possessed of grace, our path will be "as the shining light growing brighter and brighter to the perfect day." Now clouds may be about us, and now mists may gather upon our way, but on the whole we shall go forward. From period to period we shall find that we are growing in grace, and becoming more and more like Christ.

3. The last use I would make of this subject, is that of *exhortation*. And,

(1) It exhorts sinners at once to enter on the practice of holiness. It is the service of God to which you are called; and will you not enter it? He is your creator, and has he not a right to your services; your sovereign, and does he not demand them; your constant benefactor, and are you not bound by every tie of gratitude to render them? If you refuse to obey, you will go on to live, as you are now living, in the service of satan and sin. And is not God's service better than these? Will it not give you more joy and happiness here, and be better rewarded here-

after? By every duty then here, and by every prospect hereafter, are you not bound to enter it, that your souls may live?

(2) It also exhorts those who are saints. The cause of God is at stake, and how much will it be dishonored by unfaithfulness on your part! Many are ready to disbelieve all religion; and your conduct may do much to remove their doubts and convince them of the reality and excellence of your faith, or to impede their progress and place stumbling blocks in their way over which they may fall and perish. Your own character as christians, and even as men of truth and honor, are involved. You profess great things, and your profession has been public and most solemn. It is a sacrament;—an oath. Be diligent then, that you walk worthy of your high and holy calling, and that you put no occasion of stumbling or falling in the way of others. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Thus "shall your light so shine before men, that they shall see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven."

SERMON XXVI.

THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL.*

1 Timothy 1: 11.—"*The glorious Gospel of the blessed God.*"

To celebrate the gospel, is the universal practice of all who profess the christian name. Those who cannot endure the law, will, in the fullest and strongest terms, commend the gospel; and those who openly declare that they cannot away with an absolute God, are most lavish of their praises of a merciful Redeemer. Even those who are at sword's points in almost everything else, yet agree in this, to speak highly of the gospel and of the Savior. They all agree that it is a glorious gospel, and that he is a glorious Savior.

But how and why is this? Is it that the gospel and the true character of the Savior are things agreeable to the natural taste and relish of the hearts of men, which yet are at enmity against God, and not subject to his law? Or is the gospel, rightly understood, any more agreeable to the corrupt heart of man than the law is; or the character of Jesus the Savior, than the character of God the lawgiver and judge? No; if we consult the apostle we shall find that these, viz. the law and the gospel, God the father and lawgiver and Christ the Son and Savior, are in no wise opposed to each other, but are in all things perfectly harmonious and consistent. For, says he, "Do we then make void the law through faith," i. e. through the gospel? And the answer which he himself directed by inspiration gives, is, "God forbid; yea, we establish the law." The law and the gospel, therefore, according to the apostle, are not at all opposed to each other, but being built on the same foundation, do mutually establish each other. Again, the same apostle speaking of Jesus the Savior, says, that "he is the brightness of the father's glory, and the express image of his person." But if he is such a perfect image of the father, surely those must act a very inconsistent part who love and rejoice in the image, while they have no complacency in, but hate and reject the original. And the same is true of those who

* Preached in 1771.

rejoice in the gospel which establishes the law, and yet hate and oppose the law itself.

From these things it appears that although all who would call themselves christians agree to speak highly of the gospel and of the Savior, and to call them a glorious gospel and a glorious Savior, yet it may be with many through misapprehension of their real nature, and of what constitutes their glory. That for which they love the gospel and love the Savior, and which they call their glory, inasmuch as it is opposed to the law and the character of God the father, is, in reality, not the true glory of the gospel, and of the Savior, but something which they falsely so call. That the gospel and the glory of it are not inconsistent with the law is evident, not only from the passages already quoted, but from many others; as Rom. 10: 4, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" and Gal. 3: 24, "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." These passages plainly show that the law is subservient to the gospel; and on the other hand that the gospel is, as to its spirit, though not as to the letter, a fulfilment of the law. The glory of the one, therefore, cannot be inconsistent with the other. Now that the gospel is indeed a glorious gospel, our text, as well as the whole of the New Testament informs us. Let us, then, inquire *wherein consists its glory?* It consists, I reply, namely in two things, the display that it makes of God's character, and the provision that it makes for man.

I. *The gospel is a glorious gospel, inasmuch as in it every one of the divine attributes is set forth in a most glorious light.*

This is true both of the natural attributes of God, and also of his moral.

1. It is true of the *natural* attributes of God. The natural attributes of God, considered as an infinite intelligence, are his power, and knowledge or wisdom. And both these are abundantly glorified in the plan of the gospel.

(1) The infinite *power* of God, was gloriously displayed in the work of creation; in producing out of nothing the heavens and the earth, the sun and moon and stars, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea, and especially in producing rational intelligences, mankind with all the hosts of heaven, angels and archangels, thrones and dominions and principalities and powers. Few more sublime conceptions of power can be conceived than that of the Psalmist, "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." The production of a universe, and that by a word, was indeed a glorious display of power that is infinite.

But a far more glorious display of that power has been made, and especially at the final consummation of all things will have been made, in the prosecution of the plan of the gospel. In the creation of the universe, there was no opposition and resistance, at least none of a moral kind, for God's power to overcome. As opposed to the plan of the gospel, however, there is all the resistance that can possibly be made by earth or hell. In every sinner who is converted from the error of his ways to the wisdom of the just, God has to overcome the utmost opposition that that soul can make to his work within it. In no degree is such a one inclined by nature to fall in with this work of God for his salvation, but to resist it; for the carnal mind is ever enmity against God and all true holiness, and can only be made willing in the day of his power. And not only is the sinner himself opposed to this work of grace, but it is also, to the utmost degree of their might, opposed by the powers of darkness, the devil and his angels, the prince of the power of the air and all his hosts. And the reason why it is opposed by these, is, because by it their kingdom is assailed, and one of their subjects is likely to be taken from them, and brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And as there is opposition to the work of divine grace in the instance supposed, from the powers of darkness, so there is in every instance where any step is taken by God to carry out the designs of the gospel. And this for the same reason as has just been given, viz., that in every such step their kingdom is attacked and shaken.

Nor is this opposition small or contemptible; for these spirits, however fallen and depraved, yet are of vast power and ability, so that they are called in scripture "principalities and powers." And especially is this true of their leader, who is called "Lucifer," "the sun of the morning;" intimating that before his fall he was as much distinguished among the heavenly hosts, as the morning star is among the stars of the firmament. And although he and all those that apostatized with him lost their holiness and moral rectitude, yet they lost not their natural power and strength. Now all this their power has ever been opposed to God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit the sanctifier, in every step of the work of redemption; and yet by them it has always been overcome. It is overcome in the conversion of every sinner, and in the progressive sanctification of every saint. It was overcome most gloriously in the complete triumph which Jesus Christ gained over these powers of darkness, in the signal victory which he achieved on the cross. It has been and will be overcome in every revolution brought to pass in the world in favor of

the church, and will finally be completely and forever overcome in the consummation of all things, when Christ shall have "put all enemies under his feet." Thus it would appear that the power of God is abundantly more displayed and more glorified in the work of redemption according to the plan of the gospel, than even in the work of creation.

(2) The same is also true with respect to the *knowledge* or *wisdom* of God. A truly divine display of the knowledge and wisdom of God is indeed given in the works of creation; in contriving the vast machine of the universe; in ordering the sun and moon and stars in their proper places; in causing them to observe their appointed times and seasons, so that summer and winter, seed-time and harvest should never cease; and in adapting all the works of nature to their proper end. But who will pretend to say that herein knowledge and wisdom are equally displayed as in the plan of the gospel? The latter is represented in scripture as far surpassing the wisdom and comprehension of angels. The apostle Peter speaking of the affairs of the gospel, says, "Which things the angels desire to look into;" which shows plainly that angels, with all their vast capacities and eager desires to know, cannot fathom the depths of wisdom displayed in the gospel. And the apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, says, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God." And if this wisdom is to be known to the angels only by the church, that is by the display of it in the application of the work of redemption, then it is manifest, that before such display, it was impossible for them to investigate and comprehend it, and therefore that in its fulness it was not displayed.

And the same thing is most manifest in reflecting on any part of this plan. For instance, who would ever have imagined that if we had once rebelled against God, it could be possible for us to be readmitted to his favor? Or if it had been known that this was possible, who could have determined in what way it might be brought to pass? Who would have imagined that it could be by the incarnation of God's own Son? Or if this had been known, who could have determined what he should do, or how he should prepare the way for God to be reconciled to us, and for our return to him? Who would have thought of his death as being a proper expedient to this end? These things utterly surpassed the wisdom of man or angels to determine, and thus to surmount the difficulties that stood in the way of our salvation. Yet all these, to creatures insurmountable difficulties, were easily over-

come by the infinite wisdom of God. He contrived a way in which he could be just and yet the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus. And therefore Christ is said by the apostle to be not only the "power," but "the wisdom" of God. Having thus endeavored to show very briefly how God's natural perfections, his power and knowledge or wisdom are displayed in the plan of the gospel, I would now, as proposed, proceed to show the same,

2. With regard to his *moral* perfections. These are commonly reckoned to be his holiness, justice, goodness and truth. On each of these I would dwell for a moment.

(1) By the *holiness* of God, we are to understand the moral purity of the divine nature, and its freedom from, and opposition to all sin. Or we may call it God's love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. After man had fallen it was a question which would have forever perplexed both men and angels, how God could forgive sin without appearing friendly to it, and giving it not only toleration but countenance. Yet a way of doing this God has found out and put in practice in the plan of the gospel. For since Christ has undertaken to make an atonement for sin and has suffered the penalty which was justly threatened against it, and since when he took the guilt on himself, God spared him not, but freely gave him up to death, and poured out upon him the vials of his wrath, it appears in the most glaring colors that he is far very far from the least disposition to befriend sin, or even to countenance or tolerate it. For if this were the case, why did he not spare his own Son when he took the sinner's place, and save him from the threatened penalty of the law? Doubtless if God were disposed to tolerate sin and remit the punishment due to it in any case, he would have done it in this. And for him to give up his own Son who is the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, who is infinitely beloved and infinitely dear to him, is more than for him to have cast off the whole world. So that in the sufferings of Christ there is a more abundant testimony borne against sin than there would have been if all mankind had been cast off forever. The holiness of God, then, is abundantly displayed and glorified in the plan of the gospel. The same is true,

(2) Of the divine attribute of *justice*. The justice of God requires that he should maintain equity in all his dealings with his creatures, and that he render to every one according to his desert; and particularly that he be just in maintaining the rights of the Godhead, and by no means suffering any injury done to his honor and law to go unpunished. And these demands of justice are all satisfied and answered in the way of the gospel.

For the dishonor done to the dignity and law of God is fully vindicated in the sufferings of Christ, so that now no injustice is done to God though the sinner be acquitted. The same will be found to hold good,

(3) Of the divine attribute of *truth*. God from the beginning threatened death to the violator of his holy law. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Now the truth of God requires that this threatening be executed. If it be not executed, what becomes of his truth? Accordingly it was executed, to the fullest extent; not indeed literally on man himself, but on his surety and substitute, so that to all intents and purposes the demands of the law are answered and satisfied, and God's word performed. The threatening which he had denounced was, that sin should be punished with death. And so strictly did he adhere to this threatening and to his word herein, that he would not set it aside even to save the life of his own Son. Rather than that his truth should fail, his own well beloved Son, who is dearer to him doubtless than thousands of angels, even he dies in anguish on the cross! We need not then scruple to say that God's truth is more glorified in the plan of the gospel, than it would have been if the sentence of the law had been literally executed; that is, it more demonstratively appears that God will in no case fall from the word that has gone forth from his lips. Once more I remark that the same is true,

(4) Of the divine attribute of *goodness*. The goodness of God, and especially that exercise of it which we call mercy, is most gloriously displayed in the gospel. This, indeed, is what none, I think, will deny, however they may deny the same as to the several other attributes which have been mentioned; and therefore I need not dwell much upon the proof. The whole dispensation of the gospel, from beginning to end, is a most wonderful display of goodness and mercy, and such a display as could not have taken place on any other plan. Had it not been for the gospel, God could never have had the glory of forgiving rebels, or of doing such things for their salvation as he has done in giving his only Son to be a propitiation for their sins. Herein it appears that he is willing to show mercy to the vilest of sinners, to those that have rebelled against him, and contemned his law, and despised his authority, and abused his grace, and trampled on the blood of his Son. And that God could or would show such mercy, even to the most ill-deserving, how could it have been manifest but by the gospel? It could not have been. There could not have been an opportunity thus to have showed mercy, had not man fallen, and the gospel dispensation been

provided for his recovery. And thus that gospel, in the sentiment of the apostle, indeed displays "the riches" of the divine goodness.

Thus we have in some measure considered what was at first proposed, viz. that the gospel is glorious inasmuch as in it every attribute of God is set in a most glorious and conspicuous light. And not only so, but those attributes which seemed to be wholly inconsistent in their exercise toward mankind, are now shown to be entirely consistent and perfectly harmonious. In accordance with this the Psalmist observes, that "Mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Had it not been for the gospel, truth would have forever appeared inconsistent with mercy, and righteousness with peace or pardon. But now in the gospel, these, and all the divine attributes are perfectly harmonized, so that God is glorified by it; and in this it appears that the gospel as a dispensation is divinely glorious.

II. *The gospel is also a glorious gospel, inasmuch as in it full provision is made for the free pardon, in consistency with the obedience of the sinner, and at the same time his obedience is secured in a way that is consistent with the free pardon of his sins.*

This is frequently made an objection against the gospel, or rather against this notion of the gospel that it consists in the free pardon of the sinner, "that it encourages licentiousness, and discourages and lays not a sufficient foundation for obedience." But that this objection is without foundation will appear on a little reflection; and it will also appear that quite the contrary is the truth, viz. that there is the most abundant security for obedience to the divine law. For the offer of the gospel is the offer of pardon to every one that believes on Christ, and to none but such. Our Lord himself declares, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Now to believe on Christ and to accept of him as our Savior, and heartily to approve of him as such, as a person of infinite holiness and purity, implies some degree, at least of true holiness in us. A person who is wholly destitute of holiness and wholly sunk in sin, can never approve of and cordially acquiesce and rejoice in another of perfect and consummate holiness. But if faith in Christ implies a holy temper, this is the proper and only principle from which all true obedience springs and which naturally leads to it.

Again, in receiving and believing in Christ, who is the express image of the Father, and who has done all that he has done in the work of redemption to honor God and promote his glory,

there is evidently implied approbation of God the Father, and his holiness and glory. Otherwise we could not approve of Christ wherein he approves of the Father. And further, Christ has magnified the law, and made it honorable, both by his active obedience and his dying to sustain it. And to receive and acquiesce in such a Savior implies that we also have a heart to approve and honor and obey the same law. Thus faith in Christ implies a foundation in the heart for love to God, and also for love to his law and a cordial obedience thereto. And he that is the subject of true faith, has this foundation laid in him. So that justification by faith in Christ, so far from discouraging from obedience, necessarily secures it.

I might go on to mention several other virtues for which this way of salvation lays a foundation; particularly humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness and brotherly love. To be sensible that we are saved only through the righteousness of another, and are continually dependent on him, naturally tends to expel pride and inspire humility in the soul. To believe in a Savior who patiently endured such things as Christ did for us, naturally tends to inspire with patience. The consideration of the forgiveness of our sins through Christ, and of the fact that we are united in one mystical body with our christian brethren, has the like tendency, if our hearts are indeed right with God, to excite in us a forgiving spirit toward our enemies, and sincere brotherly love towards all the true disciples of the Savior. But these things I have only time to mention. The mere mention of them, however, is enough, I presume, to show that in these respects, as in the others that have been stated, the plan of the gospel has no tendency to discourage from obedience to the divine law, but on the contrary effectually secures that obedience in all who comply with it.

I have thus endeavored to show that the gospel is a glorious gospel, because in it every divine attribute, whether natural or moral, is most eminently displayed; and also because it renders the free pardon of sin consistent with the obligation of the law in those who comply with it, and at the same time secures in all such a holy life. In the improvement of the subject I remark,

1. If the gospel be indeed so glorious a gospel as appears from what has been said in the present discourse, then we may see *how highly favored we are in enjoying the revelation of it.* The revelation of the gospel is so familiar to multitudes that they seem to esteem it no favor, no privilege at all. But let such consider what their state would have been if they had lived under the dim light of the Old Testament dispensation, or in the deep

darkness of heathenism; or what it would have been if there had been no plan of reconciliation between God and man revealed. And by dwelling on these things, let them learn suitably to prize the gospel and all its privileges.

2. If the gospel be so glorious and excellent, then let us all *be exhorted to make it the object of constant and close attention and study.* You remember the good report which the noble Bereans obtained by this very thing. They are left on eternal record as praised of God for searching the scriptures daily. Let us then follow their example which is so strongly commended to our imitation. To do this we are also encouraged by the example of the angels themselves. They, as the apostle Peter expressly declares, desire to look into these things; they make them the object of their continual meditation and investigation. The study of the gospel is an angelic and heavenly study. And truly it is in every respect a most noble study, even to the bright and holy intelligences of heaven. Its subjects are the most noble and grand in the universe, and the most pleasing and delightful to those who have a taste for them. They afford constant delight and entertainment to all the hosts of heaven, both saints and angels, and will afford the same to all who shall be so happy as hereafter to arrive at that blessed world; and as Christ, through eternal ages, shall unfold their mysteries, and display their inexhaustible riches and glories, they shall be endless sources of instruction and delight, filling the soul with joys that are unspeakable and full of glory.

And not only is the study of the scriptures an entertaining and noble employment, but it is as useful as it is agreeable. It is useful for every class of men, both saints and sinners. It is one of the principal means of awakening, conviction and conversion to those who are careless and secure in their sins. What can have a more powerful tendency this way, than for sinners to peruse, and as in the very presence of God to meditate on the most solemn and interesting truths of the gospel? And though there be no absolute promise to the sinner while he remains such, yet the experience of all ages shows that while thus seriously perusing and attending to the solemn truths of the gospel, he is in the most likely way that he can be in, to obtain the saving grace of God. Therefore for sinners to neglect these means of grace, is to act most unwisely and presumptuously, and highly to provoke a gracious God.

And as the study of the gospel is thus useful for sinners, so it is also for saints. As it is a means of awakening and conviction to the former, so it is of comfort, establishment and edification to the latter. By attending to the gospel, they will learn more of

God and his sovereignty, of Jesus Christ and his wonderful grace and love to men, of their own vileness in themselves and their dependence on the Holy Spirit. And these views will have a powerful tendency to fill their hearts with adoration and thankfulness for the grace of the gospel, and with humility and self-abasement for their own sinfulness and short-comings, and will lead them to place less dependence on themselves, and more on Jesus Christ. Attention to the gospel is also a powerful means of weaning the heart from the world and the things of it, and of fixing the affections on things that are above. It makes the way of duty plain, and unfolds the dangers of temptation, and arrays before the individual every motive to walk in the one and guard against the other. It continually points to eternal realities, so as to make them, as it were, present, and thus leads us to live as "seeing things invisible," having "our conversation in heaven." And, in short, in every respect it is a most powerful means of promoting the sanctification of the saints, and their growth in grace. Those, therefore, who neglect this noble and divine employment of attending diligently to the gospel of Christ, are wholly inexcusable, and so they will find it in the last great day.

3. Let us take occasion from this subject to inquire *whether we have complied with this glorious gospel?* To comply with the gospel is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now many have something which they suppose to be faith, and yet which falls far short of the reality. Let us then examine as to our faith. And in so doing we may try it by the following signs:

(1) If our faith be genuine we shall receive Christ with a cordial approbation of the holiness of his character, as well as of his grace and mercy. We shall esteem him as a Savior from the influence as well as from the condemnation of sin, and as much desire to be saved by him from the former as the latter. To do otherwise—to approve of his grace and mercy, and not of his holiness, is to divide those things that in their nature are inseparable, and thus to prove that our faith is spurious.

(2) If our faith is genuine, we shall receive and approve of Christ in every part of his character, and in all his relations to us. We shall approve of him as our prophet to instruct us, and shall delight in all his instructions. We shall approve of him as our priest, expecting and desiring salvation only through the blood of his atonement. We shall approve of him as our king, and delight in all his laws and commands, endeavoring to live faithfully according to them.

(3) If our faith be genuine, we shall bring forth fruits meet for it. It will be our delight to live a life of holiness, and also

the object of our constant endeavor. And our profiting herein will doubtless in a greater or less degree appear unto all men. Thus we shall show our faith by our works; which if we do not, in vain shall we flatter ourselves with the imagination, that we are believers; in vain shall we expect a share in the charity of men here, or the divine favor hereafter. It is forever true that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

4. If the gospel be so glorious, *how inexcusable will be all those who comply not with it.* The greater its glory, the greater the obligation on all to accept its offers. And how justly will God be provoked with those who finally refuse to comply with its demands and accept its grace! Such a refusal implies a contempt not only of the gospel but of the law, not only of Christ our Savior but of God the father, a contempt on the one hand of the mercy of eternal life, and on the other of the woes of eternal death. It implies the basest ingratitude, and the darkest guilt. It will but prepare those who are chargeable with it, to hear at last from God, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you." Therefore let all repent of this their impenitence and unbelief, and "pray God if perhaps the thought of their heart may be forgiven." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

SERMON XXVII.

THE BROAD WAY.*

MATTHEW 7: 13.—*"Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."*

THESE words were uttered by our Lord in his sermon on the mount. They contain an exhortation, with an enforcement. The exhortation is "to enter in at the strait gate;" this is what he would have all his hearers do. What the strait gate is, appears by the next verse, viz. the gate which openeth into life; "strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life." The argument which our Savior uses to enforce this exhortation is this: "for wide is the gate and broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." This argument or enforcement has a double force; lying partly in what is implied and plainly understood, and partly in what is expressed.

The thing implied is this, that there is no middle passage between the strait gate with its narrow way, and the wide gate with its broad way; and that if men do not enter in through the former into life, they must unavoidably enter through the latter into the broad way which leadeth to destruction. So that our Lord virtually tells his hearers that as they would avoid destruction, and as they value their immortal souls and eternal life, they must enter in at the strait gate.

What is expressed in this enforcement, is what our Lord observes of the gate and way that lead to destruction; that the gate is wide, and the way broad. By this he would let us know the danger there is that we shall enter in at this gate, and walk in this way. For whenever there are two gates, the one so wide as to admit of an easy entrance, and the other so small and strait that it cannot be entered without great toil and labor, men are strongly tempted and much exposed to enter the former and pass by the latter. So also when there are two ways or roads, the one broad and plain and well beaten, the other narrow and ob-

* First preached in 1768.

scure and difficult to find; men are apt to pass on in the former heedless of the latter. Our Lord would also make us further sensible of this danger by the consequence which actually takes place; that "many there be which go in thereat." While the strait gate and narrow way which lead unto life are heedlessly passed by and trodden by very few, thousands and thousands crowd into the wide gate and drive along the broad and plain and easy way which leadeth to destruction.

In further speaking from these words, I would 1. Show what the destruction is that is spoken of in our text; 2. In what respects the gate is wide; 3. How we are to understand the expression that many go in thereat; 4. Give some reasons why so many go in at the wide gate by the broad way to destruction; and 5. Urge by way of improvement the counsel of Christ in the text.

I. *I am to show what the destruction is which is spoken of in the text.*

There are two kinds of destruction. One is that of which the subject is not sensible. This is annihilation, wherein something is turned into nothing, or entirely ceases to exist. In this sense the souls of brute creatures are supposed to be destroyed at their death, so as utterly to sink into nothing. In this destruction they suffer no pain or distress. In what precedes it they may, but in the destruction itself they are wholly insensible either of pain or pleasure.

Now if this were the destruction to which mankind are liable, it would not be wonderful that they should be careless and unconcerned about it. For in this case they would have no knowledge of the evil which they suffered in being destroyed; nor would they, in non-existence, feel the loss which they had sustained. But their destruction is a far more terrible thing than this. It is a sensible destruction, or a destruction of which the subject is conscious at the same time that he suffers it. It consists in a sensible abolishment of whatever pertains to, or concerns the rational creature's well being and happiness. It is a destruction which is universal, total and perfect, which does not affect a person's welfare merely in one or in many respects, but in all. His welfare and happiness of every kind are utterly abolished, and all that pertains to them. And not only so but the very perfection of the contrary misery takes place.

The happiness or good of a rational creature may be considered as consisting in two things: excellence of nature and disposition, and comfort and pleasure enjoyed. The excellence of his nature and disposition is his spiritual conformity to the image of God.

Now with respect to this good of excellence, mankind are all by nature already destroyed; for "they are dead in trespasses and sins." There are however remaining certain natural principles which fit them for social life and render them agreeable to themselves and their neighbors. But in this universal destruction, even these will be destroyed. The same will be the fate also of all comfort and pleasure, arising from any outward good things of life or from any agreeable enjoyments whatsoever. All comfort and happiness shall be forever removed, and the creature crushed under the weight of misery, insomuch that all strength and joy and hope shall be entirely and forever gone. Thus the soul like a vessel will be emptied of all good and filled with complete misery—misery which will fully occupy every part of its capacity. This is that universal, total and perfect destruction of the rational creature of which we have spoken; and this is the destruction meant in our text. This also is the destruction, which is the proper "wages of sin," and the fruit of the vengeance of God the creator against the creature that dares rebel against him. This is the death threatened in the law. This is the destruction of hell, or the death of the damned, that is, the second death. This is infinitely more terrible, infinitely more to be dreaded, than any partial destruction which can be suffered in life; yea, than death, or even annihilation itself.

II. *We come now to consider in what respects the gate is wide, and the way broad which leadeth to destruction.*

1. The gate is wide in this respect, that there is *no difficulty in finding it.* The passage is so wide that it cannot escape notice. It lies open to fair view, insomuch that one cannot open his eyes without seeing it. It is not at all in this respect like the gate that opens into life. This cannot be found without great care and attention. It is so small and strait a gate that if men are not very diligent, and if they do not search with all care and application, there is danger of their never finding it. And many who suppose themselves to have found it, do but deceive themselves, mistaking for it what is only some by-path of the broad way which leadeth to destruction. The utmost care and diligence therefore are needful in order to find the strait gate, and to walk in the truly narrow way. But in order to find the wide gate and to keep in the broad way, nothing is wanting but to walk onward without the least care or concern. For all are by nature already in that way; and all that is necessary for their finding the gate that opens into destruction, is, that they walk straight forward in the way in which they already are. Yea, further, this gate is so wide, that it can be easily found in the dark. Those who dwell

in the midnight darkness of heathenism, with the utmost ease walk on in the broad way, and without difficulty enter in at the wide gate; whereas the strait gate is scarcely to be found and the narrow way scarcely to be followed even in the blazing sunshine of gospel light. This broad gate is, as it were, as wide as the wide world itself. Instead of being hard to find, it is hard to miss it; insomuch that go which way you will, there is the greatest danger of entering in thereat; and it is avoided by none but the few, the happy few, who walk with great toil and difficulty in the narrow way. "If the righteous are scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

2. This way is broad also, in this respect, that *men may take many different courses and yet all be in it.* There is such a latitude in the way, that it allows of men's going in many very different directions, and yet all shall keep in the way, and all at last arrive at and pass through the same wide gate. There are millions of different passages, all of which belong to this broad way; and some are found in one and some in another. Some choose to enter into the wide gate by a course of "rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness," giving themselves up to open luxury and debauchery. Others choose to walk in a course of covetousness and worldly-mindedness which equally leads to the same dark end. Some choose the road of open profaneness and impiety. Others are better pleased with the covert, disguised ways of lying hypocrisy. Some are wholly intent upon the pleasures of animal nature. Others, to the no small mortification of these, bend their whole force to the pursuit of the empty bubbles of honor and ambition. Thus men in these and a thousand other instances cross each others track, and thwart one another in their different courses, while yet they are all travelling the same general broad way, which leadeth to destruction.

And not only is this true with regard to different persons, but one and the same person may alter his course and take at times, very different paths, and still keep in the broad way. In that way there is room enough to wander, now to take this path and now that, so that one may go therein in a very crooked course. And in this manner he may go to destruction. He may make many changes and alterations in his conduct, sometimes pursuing one vain object and sometimes another. Now he may be all engaged in this course of darling delights, and now he may change it for another which equally leads to the same destruction.

3. This way is broad also in this respect, that *there is need of very little resistance and violence to be used in order to go forward therein.* In any narrow way there is need of pressing and

violence in order to get along. So it is in the narrow way which leadeth unto life. Hence the remark of our Lord, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force;" and again, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." But in a broad and spacious way men find room to get along without difficulty. And thus it is in the way that leads to destruction. There is little or no difficulty or opposition met with by those who tread therein. At some times indeed their conscience may smite and reproach them, and fill them with fears for the future; but they soon sear it, and again go on unmolested. Notwithstanding all the crowds of men which travel this way, yet is there space sufficient for them all to pass on without stopping or pressing one against another. The way is broad and the gate wide enough to admit them. None have need to stop a moment for want of room to proceed. They meet too with little or no opposition in travelling this road; for it is agreeable to their natural temper and depraved disposition. It leads as it were down hill, whither their own weight will carry them. It is down a strong current and a man may sleep and yet be hurried swiftly along to death.

III. *We come now to the next thing proposed, which is to consider how we are to understand the expression "many there be which go in thereat."*

Plainly it implies these two things,

1. That the number is very great if we consider *what proportion they bear to the whole world of mankind.* By far the greater part of mankind so far as we can judge go in at this wide gate. And so it has been in all ages. How was it in the old world? We read of very few that avoided it. Some indeed of the posterity of Seth are supposed to have walked in the narrow way, while the rest of the world went in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. In like manner after the flood, we read of but very few concerning whom we have any evidence but that they entered in at the wide gate. And even among the chosen seed of Abraham, but here and there one is spoken of as "fearing God and walking in his commandments;" while the whole nation is called "a rebellious house," "a stiff-necked and hard-hearted people, who grieved the Lord and erred in their heart, not having known his ways." And the same has also been the case with the world since christianity has been introduced. Very few in comparison with the whole of mankind have forsaken the broad way, and entered through the strait gate into life. But,

2. What our Lord here says, also implies that the number of

those who enter in at the wide gate is very great *compared even with the whole number that have the instruction and counsels of God's word.* How small is the number of those, who give any evidence of their title to life, even in the land where the gospel is preached! "Many are called but few are chosen." Many are invited to forsake the dangerous broad way and fly from the wide gate. But alas! how few are there who hearken to the divine call and obey the divine invitation. The number is also great if compared with the number of those who hope to enter into life. Most of those who live under the light of the gospel entertain a hope that they shall at last enter in at the strait gate and obtain the possession of eternal life. And the most of them are also deceived; insomuch that with full expectation they shall finally seek to enter in and shall not be able. To the question, "Are there few that be saved?" our Savior replied, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence you are: Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say unto you, I know you not, whence you are; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity." We come now as proposed,

IV. *To give some reasons why so many go in at the wide gate, by the broad way leading to destruction.*

The reasons which I shall mention are those which have a special respect to such as live under the light of the gospel. These reasons may be summed up in the two mentioned in the text and the following verse; viz. the wideness of the way leading to destruction, and the narrowness of the way of life. The way of life is narrow on account of the many trials and temptations to be met with in travelling it. There are many rough places in this way, where is required the utmost effort and the exertion of every power in order to get along therein. And the greatest obstacle and hindrance of all, is the individual's own heart, and the opposition which arises from within. These things make the way of life as it were a continual ascent. Even the christian is like one rowing against the stream. He has need of constant and vigorous exertion; and if he slackens his stroke he is carried backward in the swift current driving him towards the wide gate of destruction. And still more others, who have never yet entered upon the narrow way, seeing these things, and know-

ing that to enter in they must part with all their darling sinful delights, find no heart, no willingness to any of these things, but a perfect opposition thereto. And this is the reason why they still keep on in the broad way to destruction. Not to insist, however, on the more general reasons which are obviously contained in our text and context, I shall endeavor to point out some other things which are the particular occasions or ways in which multitudes are ruined and led down to destruction. And,

1. The first occasion of this kind which I shall mention, is, that in general *little or no pains are taken with children when young for the good of their souls*, by those who have care of their education. The minds of children, while they are young, are tender and easily affected by solemn truths, if seasonably set before them. These truths if instilled into them in early years, have a most lasting and abiding effect. Hence that proverb of Solomon, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Not that I would insinuate that if parents should faithfully discharge their duty to their children, this would be sufficient to give them a saving knowledge of the truth, without the divine agency in regeneration. But that this is the more common and ordinary way in which God is pleased to bestow his grace. That knowledge which would be thus communicated to children by the faithful instructions of their parents, would be a great restraint upon them, keeping them back from running into evil habits and abandoned and loose lives. Those who should be thus educated would not immediately (as others) run into open sin, with carelessness and stupidity and hardness of heart. But as the case now is, little and in most cases nothing of this care and diligence of parents being exercised towards their children, they are left without any better principles and motives of action than their own corrupt unrestrained biases; and thus following these, they slide with an easy descent down the broad way to destruction.

2. Another way whereby more especially many bring upon themselves eternal ruin, is *their presuming upon the mercy of God.* They have heard much of the infinite mercy of God, and they expect that he will be merciful to them. Why? Because they have complied with the terms of the covenant of grace? No; but because they think damnation is so dreadful a thing that they hope and expect that God will not be so severe as to inflict it upon them. Thus they settle down in sinful security which finally brings on their eternal ruin. But let such men know that although it be a dreadful thing that any one should be eternally damned, yet it is much more dreadful that the honor and dig-

nity of God's government should not be maintained; and rather than it should not be maintained, not one, or some few only of the human race, but thousands and thousands of them shall be sent down to everlasting destruction.

3. Another way, whereby many contribute much to their own ruin and destruction is this, *that they quiet their own consciences by their intentions of future repentance and reformation.* These men by hearing of the terrors of the law, and by reflecting upon their own conduct and exercises of heart, perceive that they are guilty, and their consciences are disquieted and inwardly troubled. But this uneasiness they endeavor to remove by flattering themselves with their own good intentions and future purposes. They see that at present they are in a wretched and miserable situation. They see that they are now in the broad way which leadeth to destruction; and will not deny, that continuing in their present course they shall infallibly go down to eternal death. And knowing all this, they would not for worlds, die in their present state. But they intend not always to continue in this state. For the present indeed they find it most agreeable. They have this or that gay scene to enjoy; this or that important transaction to finish; and then they intend to begin a reformation. Then they intend to forsake the broad way in which they have hitherto walked, and to enter in good earnest upon the narrow way which leadeth unto life. This is eminently the case with persons in youth. They think there is time enough yet for them to become religious; they are but young, and they know many persons who have lived in the free enjoyment of youthful gaities much longer than they have, who yet afterwards reformed and became very good men. And they see no reason why they may not also do the same. And this is what they intend, or at least think they intend hereafter. After they shall have arrived at such an age, they think they shall be just fit for the gloomy business of religion, and that then it will be an easy employment. They seem to think that religion is as it were, the natural product of old age; and that therefore it will then be an easy thing for them to become christians. By these and such like faint intentions, they quiet the uneasiness of conscience; and instead of indeed forsaking their present evil course and entering upon the paths of true wisdom, they quietly settle down in their present state and undisturbedly walk on in the broad way which leadeth to destruction.

4. Another way whereby many aid on their own ruin, is this, *that by false glosses, reasonings and conclusions they endeavor to make those things appear innocent which they are conscious*

to themselves are wrong and wicked. This very many are guilty of doing. They first commit wickedness, and then they cast about on all sides to find arguments to justify it. What they have done they wish were innocent, and they endeavor to prove it to be so. Or if they have not yet committed the evil, yet being desirous of committing it, they are desirous of being able to justify it, that then they may commit it with a quiet conscience. While it is the wish of their hearts that such an action were innocent, they will in most cases flatter themselves into the belief that it really is so. For in this case, they are altogether under the power of prejudice, even that prejudice by which man in most cases is entirely blinded. They are both prejudiced in favor of the innocency of the action and against the contrary. This being the case, whatever arguments and reasons there are to be urged in favor of its innocency are attended to with eagerness, and admitted in their full weight and strength; while those things which tend to make it appear that the action is evil and wicked, are carelessly overlooked or cautiously kept out of view. Thus by these means many more persuade themselves of the innocency of actions and conduct in which there is the most heinous guilt. And being persuaded of this, they have nothing now to prevent their proceeding with ease in the plain, descending and broad way of death. And by these means multitudes seem to take pains to bring upon themselves eternal destruction.

5. Another reason of the destruction of such a vast multitude of mankind is, *that many who are in the broad way yet flatter themselves concerning their safe estate.* They say to themselves, "peace, peace, when there is no peace" to the wicked. There is in mankind a certain unaccountable backwardness to believe that they are in a really dangerous estate. Although they are frequently informed of this, yea, though God himself has solemnly and repeatedly declared it to them, yet with regard to themselves they cannot believe it. They hear indeed much said about the total corruption of human nature, and of the absolute necessity of the new birth, and that old things must pass away and all become new. But although they have never found any such extraordinary change in themselves, nor those fruits and marks of it which the scriptures lay down, yet they will flatter themselves that they are in a condition at least tolerably good. They find many good things in themselves all which they cannot believe God will disregard. They have never been guilty of any enormous acts of wickedness, such as lying, drunkenness, theft or murder. And therefore concluding that they are much better than those who have been guilty of those things, they at the same

time imagine themselves to be in general tolerably good; insomuch that they cannot think they are now going on in the broad way to destruction, but think they have at least *begun* to walk in the narrow way which leadeth unto life. Thus while they so deceive themselves is it not to be wondered that they forsake not their present course for another, and that they persist in the broad way going down to destruction with a lie in their right hand?

6. Another thing which also occasions the destruction of many is, *the offences and stumbling blocks thrown in their way by those who profess to be true christians.* Those who are without are always watching the conduct of professors of religion; and not without reason. For the profession which they make is a very extraordinary one; and well may they expect that the attention of others, especially of those who would justify themselves in sin, will be excited to observe whether or no they act up to that profession. Professors are a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid from the view and observation of mankind. They are a candle not put under a bushel, or under a bed, but on a candlestick that they which enter in may see the light. When therefore these professors conduct unworthily of their profession and live not up to the rules of the gospel, others who are without will take occasion from it to justify themselves in their sin and to harden themselves in their iniquity; and to conclude either that all religion is vain, or else that they have as much of it as any others whatever. And such occasions as these, they who are without are for the most part glad to seize and use for their own justification. O! how careful then ought professors to be, to cause their light so to shine before men, that they may see their good works, and thus be led to glorify their Father who is in heaven! How careful should they be so to live as to cut off all occasion from those who seek occasion to dishonor God and ruin their own souls.

7. I observe once more that another occasion of the destruction of such multitudes is, *that men do as it were draw another along down the broad way to death.* This appears in a variety of instances. Thus among those in youth, how much corruption and wickedness will one evil companion spread. Many persons in youth are led into those abominations by others, of which perhaps they themselves would never have thought, and which when they once have come to practise they never again forsake, but are finally ruined. In like manner also the heads of families, by setting a bad example, frequently become the occasion of leading their whole families into such iniquities as prove their eternal ruin. So also it is with men in elevated and honorable stations in

life, or men of superior understanding, property and influence. If they themselves be corrupt and set an evil example, they frequently spread corruption and wickedness far and near, and occasion the ruin of the greater part of whole societies and bodies of men. Thus "one sinner destroyeth much good;" and thus notwithstanding the way is so broad and plain and of such easy descent, yet do men, as it were, crowd and drag one another along down to its end of ruin. Having thus in some manner spoken upon the first four topics proposed, we come now by way of improvement,

V. *To press the counsel given by Jesus Christ in our text to enter in at the strait gate.*

If the gate is so strait and the way so narrow which leads to life that but few ever find it, and if the gate is so wide and the way so broad that leadeth to destruction that many there be which go in thereat; this shows the great danger we are in lest we be swallowed up with the multitude which go down to destruction, and also the great care and diligence which are needful in order to avoid the wide gate and to escape from the broad way, and to walk in the narrow way so as to obtain eternal life. The great and deep earnestness and pains to be used in this affair are expressed by striving. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate;" or as the word properly signifies, "agonize" or strive with all the eagerness and distress of an agony. This is the counsel and advice which Christ himself gives; and will you not hearken and comply with it? That you may indeed be prevailed upon to do this, I beg you to consider these several things, which I shall mention:

1. This counsel and advice of Christ *is the most important counsel* that ever was given you. You may have had counsel given which is very important respecting your temporal interest, counsel directing you how to avoid the loss and ruin of your estate, of your honor and reputation, or your liberty; or what is commonly esteemed more than all these, you may have been counselled how to avoid the loss of your life. But what is the counsel given in any or all of these instances compared with that given in our text? What if you should lose all your worldly possessions, and from flourishing circumstances should be reduced to want and beggary? What if you should lose all honor and reputation among men, and they should hate you and separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil? What if you should lose your liberty, and be reduced to a state of the most abject slavery, or should even lose your lives also? What would the loss and ruin even of all these things be, when compared with that terrible destruction mentioned in our

text? But further, you may have had counsel given you, not only directing you how to prevent the losses, but how to make great acquirements in the the things mentioned; how to make great acquirements for instance in worldly possessions, or in honor and promotion among men; and this counsel may have been of great importance to you. But of what importance is it when compared with that counsel given in the text? What are all the losses and gains which can happen in these things compared with the infinite loss to be sustained on the one hand, or the infinite gain to be acquired on the other, according as you go on in the broad way that leadeth to destruction, or in the narrow way which leadeth unto life? When laid in the balance together, they are but as an atom to mountains; the former are less than nothing and vanity. "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Yet the counsel which you have received as to the one class of things, you have doubtless, in many instances complied with. How much more then ought you to comply with this counsel given by our Lord in the text?

2. Not only is this advice and counsel of our Lord important, *but is given to you by one who is your very great friend.* There can be no one so truly your friend as one who is willing to die in your stead. Nor is there any love equal to dying love. The person who undertakes to die in another's stead and does actually die, gives the highest possible evidence of his love and friendship. But this evidence has Christ given of his love and regard to mankind. He gave up himself to suffer death in their stead, without any motive to excite him thereto but pure love and good will. What other motive could there be to influence him? Could he gain anything by it? Could it be of any profit or advantage to him? No; not in the least; and yet he freely gave himself up to be offered a sacrifice for us. Our Lord Jesus Christ, even to this day, retains a standing monument of his love to sinners, in that he still retains his human nature, although exalted to a glorified state in heaven. He also gives abundant evidence of the same love, by his frequent and most gracious invitations to sinners in general to come to him and accept of life, as well as by the application of the benefits of redemption to particular persons. If therefore you have been ready to hearken to your friends in the counsel which they have given you, how much more ought you to hearken to the counsel of our text given you by the greatest and best friend to sinners that ever was, or ever will be on earth. Again,

3. Let us consider also *the friendly manner* in which this

counsel is proposed, and that *it is in order to prevent and dissuade us from our own ruin.* Christ sees us in the way which leadeth to destruction, but he feels for our danger and is unwilling we should proceed therein. He therefore in a most friendly manner counsels us to forsake our present course, and to enter in at the strait gate which leadeth unto life. The Lord God also expresses himself after the same manner. Ez. 18: 31, "Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby you have transgressed and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourself and live ye." And not only here but in innumerable other places God proposes this counsel in the same friendly manner.

4. This great friend of yours *does not give this counsel upon any slight apprehensions of the destruction to which you are exposed* but with a perfect knowledge of it. You on your part have *heard* of this destruction, but he *sees* it. Job 26: 6, "Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering." He sees what misery the wicked suffer in the other world; he knows perfectly all their pains and tortures. He clearly sees the fearfulness which surprises the multitudes who walk in the broad way, as they pass by the gate of death to the invisible world. Yea, further, he has given abundant evidence of his great sense of the dreadfulness of this destruction. Now if Jesus Christ had not known, and had not also a very great sense of its dreadfulness would he have ever laid down his life to save men from it? Would he have ever deemed all this expense needful to save men from any trifling, inconsiderable evil? Had Christ come to us and told us that this destruction was dreadful, even his word would have been great evidence of it. Or if he had come into the world and not only told us this, but had labored and toiled much in order to deliver us from it, this would have been still greater evidence. But how much greater is the evidence when he comes, and not only toils and labors much, but humbles himself to death, even the death of the cross? Hearken, therefore, to the counsel of him who perfectly knows and has given such abundant evidence of his great sense of the dreadfulness of that destruction to which you are exposed.

5. Again; besides the warnings and counsels given by Christ in his word, *you have many other warnings* also to enter in at the strait gate. Death has come and suddenly carried away many who were stupidly going on in the broad way. Many no doubt of your acquaintance have been walking in that way, who

never intended to be overtaken therein by the king of terrors, and yet have been suddenly snatched away with little or no time to prepare. These things have been loud calls of providence to you, inculcating the same counsel as this in our text. Again; many of those who have walked all their life long in the broad way, when they have come to die being sensible of their awful condition and that they were sinking to hell, have left their most earnest and solemn warnings to you not to live as they have lived. O! how have they wished for but one year, one month, one week longer to live, that they might spend it in a very different manner from that in which they have spent their past lives! And they have in the most earnest and affecting manner called upon those around them to beware of treading in their steps. You have also been warned by those who have truly repented of their sins, and have forsaken the broad way that leadeth to destruction. They have told you the danger that you are in, and have exhorted you to flee from the wrath to come. And what do you think will be the consequence, if after all these warnings you persist in the broad way? Hear the words of Solomon, "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy."

6. And *the suddenness of this destruction* should be an additional motive to comply with the counsel of our text. It is commonly represented in scripture as coming on men very suddenly and unexpectedly. Thus it is compared to a cry at midnight, which happens when all are buried in sleep, and have no expectation of any such thing. It is compared also to a thief in the night, who always comes in the most secret manner and at a time when he is least expected. Matt. 24: 42, 43, "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." And this the apostle speaks of as evidently and perfectly well known to the church in his days. 1 Thess. 5: 23, "For ye yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." So also Job 27: 20, 21, "Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east wind carrieth him away and he departeth; and as a storm hurleth him out of his place." The coming of Christ is also compared to a snare.

Luke 21: 35, "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Eccl. 9: 12, "For man also knoweth not his time as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and the birds that are caught in a snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time when it falleth suddenly upon them." Thus it was with the old world; they were going heedlessly along the broad way, till sudden and unexpected destruction came upon them; and so also was it in the days of Lot. Luke 17: 26, etc. "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." The dissolution of the world is also compared to the sliding of the feet. Deut. 32: 35, "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense; their feet shall slide in due time." And the Psalmist says, "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places." Upon the whole then unless you comply with the counsel given in the text, you are daily exposed to the sudden destruction of the rich man. While he was meditating how he should lay up for his soul much goods for many years, that he might eat and drink and be merry, God said to him, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." Finally;

7. If you do not comply with this counsel, *what will you think of your own conduct hereafter?* Your time in this world is but very short at the longest, and how much it may be shortened you know not. When therefore it shall be forever past, and you shall come to reflect upon your conduct in another world, what will be your sentiments? Without doubt you will mourn at the last, when your flesh and your body are consumed, you will say, "How have I hated instruction and reproof and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me?" You will then curse yourselves for your folly and stupidity. You will curse yourselves that you were such fools that when such a price was put into your hands to get wisdom, you had no heart to improve it. Then, every kind invitation of the gospel, every kind and friendly warning of Christ, the consideration of his painful life, and of his shameful and accursed death, as well as every wholesome warning of providence, of your friends, of God's ministers, and of the Holy Spirit, will

be as a fiery sting and as the worm that never dies to your souls! Then when the wrath of God shall actually have taken hold upon you, it will be too late for repentance. Then will you be in the wretched condition of Esau "who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right; and who afterwards when he would have inherited the blessing was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." You will have sold your birth-right for eternity, and you cannot regain it, though you weep and mourn forever!

SERMON XXVIII.

UNIVERSAL SALVATION INCONSISTENT WITH SALVATION BY CHRIST.*

1 Timothy 1 : 15.—*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*

If this be a faithful saying, it is worthy of our faith or belief, and if worthy of our belief, it is true. But if it be true that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, there was doubtless a wisdom, a propriety, yea, a necessity for it; for it is altogether incredible that he should descend from heaven, abdicate for a season its glory and blessedness, become incarnate and die on the cross to save sinners, unless all this was wise, proper and necessary. But I conceive that the doctrine of the salvation of all men is incapable of being reconciled with this plain, acknowledged and fundamental fact testified in our text; and I propose in the present discourse to compare that doctrine with this fact, and inquire whether they can be reconciled. If all men are to be finally saved, it will be either through Christ, or not through him. Let either supposition be adopted; it is proposed to consider them both.

I. *All men will be saved through Christ.*

If so, all will be saved by him either from an *endless*, or from a *temporary* punishment. In this again let either supposition be adopted.

1. We will suppose that Christ came to save all men *from an endless punishment.* If this supposition be true, several important consequences will follow.

(1) That an endless punishment is the curse of the divine law; the very curse which the law denounces against every sinner. We read, Gal. 3: 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." It is a question of primary importance in all discussions concerning the future punishment of the wicked, "What is the curse or threatening of the divine law?" This text in Galatians determines peremptorily that it is the curse from which Christ hath redeemed us; and

* First preached in 1784.

if Christ hath redeemed us, as is now supposed, from an endless punishment, then an endless punishment is the curse threatened in the law. So far seems to be plain.

(2) It will also follow from the supposition that Christ came to save us from an endless punishment, that an endless punishment of the sinner is deserved, and may be inflicted consistently with perfect justice. If God himself be a just God, his law is just. If his law be just, the curse denounced in it is just. But this curse is that very one, whatever it be, from which Christ came to save us, and by the present supposition is conceded to be an endless punishment.

Besides, the justice of inflicting endless punishment on the sinner, appears immediately from what is granted in the supposition now before us. It is supposed that Christ came to save us all from an endless punishment; therefore we were justly exposed to an endless punishment. Otherwise there was no need at all that Christ should be sent to redeem and save us from such a punishment. God would have been obliged, on the footing of law and justice, to preserve us from it. He was originally bound by justice never to threaten it, and if he had threatened it, immediately to abolish the threatening. The very enacting of a law with this threatening annexed to it, unless it was perfectly just, was an act of oppression and tyranny; and for the Deity to perform such an act, would be to deny himself and to divest himself of all moral perfection or rectitude. Nor can we any more reconcile with God's rectitude, the sending of Christ his Son to redeem or save us from an unjust punishment. To insist on an atonement, or ransom, or redemption, in order to preserve us from an endless punishment when it was not justly due to us, is equally, if not more unjust and tyrannical than the threatening of such a punishment. Nor is it any more credible, or consistent with the moral perfection of Jesus Christ that he should redeem us from an unjust punishment. This would have been to justify iniquity, and to join with God the Father in a system of tyranny and oppression, and consequently would bring the guilt of such a system on himself. It would have been no more than right in this case, that Christ should indeed have taken a part friendly to sinning men, not by redeeming them from a punishment to which they were not justly exposed, but by pleading the cause of justice, and insisting that they should be liberated without any redemption at all.

Thus if we allow that Christ came to save all men from an endless punishment, we must not only give up the moral rectitude of God and of his son Jesus Christ, but must impute to them the

grossest oppression and iniquity. Nor is there any way to avoid these shocking consequences, but by granting that an endless punishment is justly threatened against all mankind, and may justly be inflicted.

(3) It follows from the supposition that Christ came to save all men from an endless punishment, that all the arguments against such a punishment drawn from its dreadfulness, or from the divine perfections of goodness, benevolence, justice and impartiality, must be entirely relinquished as being nothing to the purpose. Yet these are some of the chief arguments in favor of the salvation of all men, the most popular, and urged with the greatest success. Thus a great champion for the salvation of all men, says, "It is not honorable to the infinitely righteous and benevolent God of the world, to make men everlastingly miserable, because sin is a finite evil;" and again, "That the doctrine of endless punishment looks like a reflection on the infinite justice, as well as goodness of God;" and again, "To reconcile this doctrine with the strict impartiality of God is beyond me." He also quotes from Mr. Whiston these words: "If the doctrine of endless punishment be true, the justice of God must be inevitably given up, and much more his goodness;" again, "That it supposes God to delight in cruelty." Now how can these things be reconciled with the mediation, death, or intercession of Christ, in order to save all men? Did God threaten a punishment which is not just; one which is not honorable to his righteousness and benevolence; such a one as gives occasion for reflections on his infinite justice; such a one as cannot be reconciled with strict impartiality; a punishment which being supposed to be inflicted, both the justice and goodness of God must be given up; such a punishment as supposes that he delights in cruelty? And having threatened this punishment did he hold to it, and refuse to release the sinner from it, but in consequence of the redemption of Christ? Or did Christ join in such an unjust procedure, and himself become incarnate, and suffer and die in order to deliver us from such a punishment? No, these things are absolutely incredible.

Yet Christ has come to redeem and save us. This is not disputed. And according to the supposition now before us, he came to redeem us from an endless punishment. What is the consequence? Why most undoubtedly this, that the endless punishment of the sinner is just, and consistent with all the divine perfections; and therefore, that all those arguments in favor of the salvation of all men which are drawn from the divine goodness and justice must be entirely relinquished. Nor can it be ever

again pleaded, that the doctrine of an endless punishment is unjust, or that it is severe and unaccountable that the greater part of mankind, (the heathen for example, and those who have had little or no advantages for knowing God and Jesus Christ) should be doomed to an endless punishment. To own that Christ came to save all men from an endless punishment, and yet to plead these and such like arguments in favor of the salvation of all, is to be entirely inconsistent with ourselves.

(4) It follows, from the supposition that all are saved through Christ from an endless punishment, that every man who is saved, is saved by free and sovereign grace and mercy. The reason is plain, that all justly deserve, and are justly exposed to an endless punishment, and therefore no man can plead justice in order to his salvation; and whosoever is saved, is saved not on the footing of justice and personal right, for if this could be, Christ would never have died, but is saved on the sole footing of free and sovereign grace.

Here I cannot but notice an inconsistency in the author of the late noted plea for the salvation of all men. He asserts that those who die in impenitence suffer in degree and duration, *in proportion to the depravity* which they contract in this life; that they will be miserable in degree and duration, in proportion to the number and greatness of their sins; that there will be a difference of punishment according to the difference in the nature and number of their evil deeds; that they will suffer positive torments awfully great in degree and long in continuance, in proportion to the number and greatness of their crimes; that some of them will suffer for ages of ages, and others variously in proportion to their deserts, and that they will suffer the wages of sin, etc. Yet at the same time he holds that all will be saved by *grace*, by free grace, by the infinite superabounding mercy and grace of God; so that all will at last join in singing glory and honor and blessing and power to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the lamb forever and ever. But how can these things consist? Surely if any suffer according to their vices, their crimes, their evil deeds; if any one receive the wages of sin, they cannot be saved by grace at all, much less by that grace which is superabounding and infinite.

(5) It follows from the supposition that all men are to be saved from an endless punishment through Christ, that a new set of threatenings expressing the curse of the law, and that eternal death from which Christ came to redeem us, must be discovered. They who allow an endless punishment of the wicked, suppose there are many passages in scripture in which such a punishment

is plainly threatened; such as these: "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire;"—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment;"—"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction;"—"Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched;"—"The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever."

But the believers in universal salvation do not allow that these texts threaten an endless punishment. Nor indeed can they allow it, consistently with their favorite doctrine. Because these texts, at the same time that they point out to us the curse of the law and the punishment which sin justly deserves, also inform and assure us that some men will actually suffer that punishment, that some shall go away into everlasting punishment, that some shall in fact be punished with everlasting destruction, that the smoke of the torment of some will ascend forever. So that if it be allowed that these texts express that endless punishment which is the true curse of the law, and from which Christ came to save all men, it must be allowed that all men will not in fact be saved. Therefore in order that the advocates for universal salvation may support the present supposition, that an endless punishment is the curse of the law, and that all men will be saved from it through Christ, they must point out a new set of threatenings expressing the endless curse of the law, and yet not assuring us that some men will suffer that curse. This they have not done, nor is it presumed will they be able to do it. Thus it appears that all men will not be saved through Christ from an endless punishment.

2. Let us suppose that *all men will be saved through Christ from a temporary punishment.* This temporary punishment must be either that punishment which is expressed in the forementioned threatenings; as "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," and "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever," or some temporary punishment of longer duration. But the temporary punishment from which all are now supposed to be saved by Christ, is not that which is expressed in the threatenings just mentioned; for it is granted by the advocates for universal salvation that this punishment will actually be endured by a number. From this therefore all will not be saved. If it be said that all will be saved through Christ from a temporary punishment which is, or was to be of a longer duration than that expressed in the threatenings above quoted, then that longer temporary punishment is the curse of the law. But it cannot be the curse of the law, because it is no where pointed out in the law, or in any part of the sacred scriptures. The sacred scriptures no where threaten a punishment of greater duration

than that everlasting punishment which is attended with a smoke ascending forever and ever. And to say that this supposed longer temporary punishment is the curse of the law from which Christ redeemed us and will save us, when no such curse is revealed in the sacred scriptures, is to the highest degree irrational and absurd. Therefore all are not saved by Christ from a temporary punishment.

Thus I have attempted to show that if all men are saved, they are not saved by Christ; because if we suppose all are saved by him, they are saved either from an endless, or from a temporary punishment. But it cannot be supposed that all men are saved by Christ from an *endless* punishment, unless it be allowed that they were justly liable to such a punishment; that it may be inflicted consistently with all the attributes of God; that all the arguments against an endless punishment, drawn from the attributes of God are to be relinquished; that no man can suffer a punishment proportioned or equal to his deserts; and that sin is an infinite evil, as by the present supposition it deserves an endless punishment; which things are utterly denied by those who hold to the salvation of all men, and are entirely inconsistent with their system. Further it appears that this hypothesis of Christ saving all from an endless punishment cannot be maintained, unless another set of threatenings can be pointed out in scripture, which declare the curse of the law to be an endless punishment, and yet do not at the same time assert that that punishment shall be suffered by some. Again; it appears that all men will not be saved by Christ from a *temporary* punishment, whether that which is expressed by the threatenings of "everlasting punishment," etc. or any longer temporary punishment. They will not certainly be saved from that punishment which is "everlasting," "forever and ever," etc. because it is granted on all hands that some will suffer this punishment. And if we suppose that they are saved by Christ from a longer temporary punishment, then that longer punishment is the very one which is threatened in the law, and is the curse of the law. Yet no such longer temporary punishment is threatened in the law, and therefore it is not the curse of the law from which Christ came to save us.

II. *It remains for us to attend to the other hypothesis made in the beginning of this discourse, viz. That all men will indeed be saved, but not through the atonement of Christ.*

It may be said that Christ came to atone for the sins of all, and to offer salvation to all; that they who repent and believe in him in this life will be saved through him; and that those who

die in impenitence shall suffer the proper punishment of sin, and then be discharged and admitted to eternal salvation, but not by the redemption of Christ.

On this view of the subject, I observe: That those who are saved according to this supposition, without the atonement of Christ, are either entitled to salvation on the footing of justice, so that they cannot be kept out of it without injury, or they have no claim to it on the footing of justice, and are therefore saved by the absolute sovereign grace of God. Let us consider both these hypotheses.

1. The first is, that those who die in impenitence are finally saved *on the footing of justice, and cannot be excluded from salvation without injury.* From this hypothesis will follow these consequences.

(1) That if this be the idea of those who believe in the salvation of all men, they must give up all those passages of scripture from which they have hitherto endeavored to prove the salvation of all men; such as these: "That Christ gave himself a ransom for all;" "that he hath tasted death for every man;" "that he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world;" and that "as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive." For these texts, if they prove universal salvation at all, prove that it is through Christ, which is contrary to the supposition now before us.

The same observations are applicable to that text so much insisted on in this controversy, recorded in Rom. 5: 18, "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." This text speaks of no salvation but that which is through the obedience of one, who is Christ. Again, Rom. 8: 21, is a favorite text with the believers in the salvation of all men. The words are: "The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." But these children are those mentioned in the 17th verse, who are there said to be "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." They are again spoken of in the 32d verse, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." And throughout this chapter the apostle speaks of salvation through Christ only. If therefore all mankind are to be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, they are doubtless to be brought to it through Christ, and in consequence of his being delivered up for them, which is contrary to the present supposition. Therefore this text is nothing to the purpose.

Another principal argument for the salvation of all men, is drawn from 1 Cor. 15: 24, 26, "Then cometh the end when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Another is drawn from Col. 1: 20, "And, having made peace through the blood of the cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." Again, Eph. 1: 10, is brought as a proof of universal salvation: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Again, Heb. 2: 8, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." But if these texts prove that all men are to be saved at all, they prove that all men are to be saved through Christ, through his redemption, through his cross, through his blood, through his death, which he tasted for every man, etc. as is manifest by the texts themselves and their contexts, and therefore they are not to the purpose of the hypothesis now under consideration; and those who hold that all men will indeed be saved, but not through Christ, must never more plead these texts which are indeed, as they say, the principal ground of their dependence in this controversy.

(2) If we go on this hypothesis, we must give up all idea of salvation by grace in the case of those who are saved out of hell. If a man suffer an adequate punishment for his sins, and then is delivered from further punishment on the footing of justice, surely there is no grace, no favor in this. It is a matter of right and justice, not of grace. On the mere ground of right, he may demand exemption from further punishment, as much as the man who being condemned to receive a certain number of stripes, after having received them, has a right on the footing of justice to demand deliverance; and if he is not exempted, but is punished any further, then he suffers downright injustice and injury.

But here it may be pleaded, that though there is no grace in delivering from further punishment the man who has already suffered an adequate punishment for his sins, yet there is grace in admitting him to the positive happiness of heaven, and that in *this* consists the proper grace of the gospel with respect to those who die in impenitence; that though they do not deserve any further punishment and so are liberated on the footing of justice, yet they do not deserve heaven, and its positive enjoyments; yea, that they deserve or can claim, nothing more than a state of

existence which is barely more than non-existence; that therefore whatever beyond this is given them is the fruit of mere grace, and that in this sense all are saved by grace. On this I observe,

[1] This is merely quibbling on the word grace. If by grace be meant the same as goodness, it is granted that any degree of happiness conferred on any creature, which is preferable to non-existence is the effect of grace. In this sense the angels in heaven are saved by grace, though they are saved entirely on the footing of law, and of the covenant of works. In this sense our first parents, yea all mankind are created by grace. In this sense the revealed law is the fruit of grace, as truly as the gospel. In this sense the creation of the animal and inanimate world is the fruit of grace.

But how does this idea of grace accord with the sacred scriptures? Rom. 10: 5, "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man that doeth these things shall live by them." But the elect angels have the righteousness which is of the law, and therefore live by doing the things of the law, and not by grace. Rom. 11: 6, "If by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more of grace; otherwise work is no more work." Here it is manifest that the apostle distinguishes between those effects of divine goodness which are founded on works, or obedience to the law, and those which are founded on grace. But the happiness of the elect angels is founded on their obedience, and therefore is not in the language of the apostle, the effect or fruit of grace. No more is the salvation or happiness of those who having suffered an adequate punishment for their sins, are thenceforward to be considered and treated, as in the sight of the law innocent, and as such are admitted to the joys of heaven. Yet such are admitted to the joys of heaven in the way of goodness, inasmuch as however innocent, they have no right to claim those joys on the footing of justice.

Agreeably to this distinction between grace and goodness, the gospel is called in Acts 20: 24, "The gospel of the grace of God." And John 1: 17, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." It is plain that in these words, the giving of the law is not considered as a fruit of grace; yet it was undoubtedly the fruit of goodness. Therefore to use the words grace and goodness as synonymous, is to renounce the sense which the sacred scriptures attach to these words, and to impose an arbitrary sense of our own.

[2] The idea of salvation which we are now considering entirely precludes all forgiveness or pardon. They who suffer the

proper punishment of their sins, a punishment proportioned to their deserts, cannot be the objects of forgiveness. What is forgiven them? They suffer the full punishment of sin; no part of that punishment is abated, or remitted to them. But the gospel is wholly ignorant of any salvation, which is not in the way of forgiveness. That this is so will be evident from a few passages of scripture, to which I would refer. Luke 1: 76, 77, "Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by or in remission of their sins." So that the salvation which John the Baptist was to make known was to be attended with remission of sins. Luke 24: 47, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." This is a part of that discourse in which our Lord finally took leave of his disciples, after his resurrection; and in these words he virtually gives them their commission to preach the gospel. In this commission there is not only no intimation that any who repent and are saved are not, at the same time made the subjects of *forgiveness;* but repentance and remission of sins are expressly connected, and the plain meaning is, that all who repent, shall be subjects of forgiveness. Acts 10: 43, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins." It is granted by all the advocates for universal salvation that all men, before they are admitted to heaven will repent and believe in Christ; and this text declares that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins; of which however there is no possibility on the supposition now under consideration.

Rom. 3: 25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." All those who plead for the salvation of all men, however they may renounce the atonement yet hold that salvation is by Christ, as the immediate author or dispenser. But this text assures us that Christ is set forth for the remission of sins, and that the salvation which he dispenses is always attended with such remission.

Heb. 10: 16—19, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord. I will put may laws in your hearts, and in your minds will I write them; and their sins, and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." The covenant spoken of in this passage is not the new covenant or the covenant of the gospel. This I presume is not denied. Now the sins of those

who are to enjoy the blessings or salvation of this covenant, will be remembered no more, which the apostle explains to mean a remission of their sins. So that all who are ever to be saved according to the gospel, (and the present question concerns such only, as we are not now disputing with those who reject the gospel;) are to be saved in the way of remission of their sins. Col. 1: 14, "In whom we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins." Whatever be intended by redemption through the blood of Christ, doubtless it implies that salvation which he dispenses; and that, it seems, implies the forgiveness of sins. Acts 26: 18. Here we are informed that Paul was sent to the gentiles, "To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of their sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified." Ch. 13: 38, 39, "Be it known unto you that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins; and by him, all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Ch. 5: 31, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." Therefore to all whom he saves, he not only gives repentance, but also the forgiveness of their sins. 1 John 1: 9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But all who repent, will confess their sins and so receive forgiveness. Mark 4: 12, "Lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them." But all who repent are converted, and therefore forgiven. Isa. 55: 7, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon." Rom. 4: 6, 7, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

I have quoted these texts to prove that the way of salvation revealed in the gospel is by forgiveness of sins, which entirely overthrows the supposition, that the damned will suffer the full punishment of their sins. Nor can I see any possible mode of attempting to evade the force of these texts, but by supposing that they refer only to those who repent and believe in this life, and that those who are brought to repentance in the future world will receive no forgiveness.

But to this supposition I answer, that so long as the salvation

of all men is attempted to be supported on the ground of scripture, its advocates are bound to show that the idea of the salvation of some without forgiveness is to be found in the sacred scriptures; which they have not yet attempted to show. Until they do this and give some probable construction to the texts first quoted to prove that all who exercise repentance and faith, or obtain an interest in the new covenant, are made the subjects of forgiveness, we have a right to consider the present evasion, as a mere evasion, not only destitute of proof, but opposed to the positive representations of scriptures just now produced.

(3) The supposition, that those who die in impenitence are all finally saved on the footing of justice, not only sets aside the atonement of Christ, but also his mediation. By a mediator is commonly meant one who interposes between two others who are at variance in order to effect a reconciliation. But how does Christ, on the present supposition, mediate between God and those who die in impenitence; or what reconciliation does he effect? None at all. He leaves them at perfect variance, till the latter have sustained all the effects of the divine wrath that justice can inflict. Then they are delivered, not by virtue of his mediation, but by virtue of their own sufferings.

The same may be said of his intercession. He is said to make continual intercession for us, and to be our advocate with the Father. But what advantage have those who die in impenitence by his intercession, or by all that he does as an advocate? They are still left in the hands of strict and rigorous justice, till they have paid the uttermost farthing.

If it be said that Christ mediates and intercedes to procure for them the positive blessings of heaven; I answer, this represents the character of God the Father in a very unfavorable light, that though all sin is atoned for and every obstacle removed out of the way, so that in the eye of the law the man is perfectly innocent, yet God of himself has no heart to bestow on him such positive blessings as wisdom and goodness recommend, and therefore in order to procure them, Christ must become a mediator and humble intercessor. Now it is manifest that there is no need of mediation and intercession in this case; and that the divine goodness itself is disposed to flow out in all wise and proper communications of happiness to creatures, when once satisfaction is made for their sins. As well may we suppose that God the Father has no heart to communicate that happiness which wisdom and goodness recommend in behalf of the elect angels, and that Christ must mediate and intercede, to persuade him to it. The very idea of such a mediation and intercession suggests a false-

hood; which is, that the objects of it are sinners, and deserve at least neglect, if not more positive punishment.

I know that men of a certain class give a peculiar explanation of the scripture words *mediator* and *intercessor*. A mediator, say they, is one who secures the accomplishment of promised blessings, and our Lord makes intercession for us by regulating and managing, as our friend and agent, all the affairs pertaining to our salvation. But in the case before us, Christ secures the accomplishment of no promised blessings. He does not secure deliverance from punishment, because this they suffer to the uttermost. And how can it be said that he secures the promise of eternal life and positive happiness? If God hath promised these, they are by virtue of that promise absolutely secure; and what can Christ do to make them more secure? The very idea of Christ's being appointed to secure the accomplishment of what God hath promised, appears to savor of impiety, as if God stood in need of a surety to gain him credit.

Again; if Christ negotiates and manages, as their friend and agent, the affairs pertaining to the salvation of those who die in impenitence, still I ask what is the advantage of all this? What do they gain by his repentance? Not deliverance from misery; not pardon; and as to any positive blessings which wisdom recommends to be bestowed on them, is God so averse to bestow them that he is not to be prevailed on to do it, but in consequence of the long and painful negotiation of his own Son? Thus we are brought into the same difficulty as before; so that on the whole, there seems to be no reconciling the mediation and intercession of Christ, with the idea that some men are saved in consequence of their having suffered a punishment according to their deserts.

(4) On this same hypothesis, where is there ground or reason for considering, or calling Christ a Savior in any sense? He no more saves those who suffer according to their deserts, than the executive officer saves the criminal who hath suffered the whole punishment to which he was condemned, and then is discharged by him. Christ is said to save us "from wrath," and to deliver us from "the wrath to come." But he does not save those from wrath who suffer all the wrath to which they are exposed.

As to the evasion before mentioned, that Christ is a Savior, as he introduces to the positive happiness of heaven; I observe, that this is no deliverance, and yet Christ is said to *deliver* us from the wrath to come, and this is the proper idea of a Savior, as when Christ is said to save his people from their sins. If the whole that Christ does, is to take sinners out of hell when they have

suffered their full punishment, and introduce them into heaven, there appears to be no necessity that this should be done by Christ, for it might as well, so far as we can see, have been done by the Father immediately, and if it had been done by him, he would have been in every sense as much their Savior as Jesus Christ is on the present supposition. Nay, he is now in the same sense, the Savior of the elect angels. Besides, why might not an angel, or almost any creature have been employed in this business? It appears to be nothing more arduous or honorable than the conducting to heaven of the departing spirits of saints, as they decease from this life. And if this last mentioned work be, as is generally supposed, performed by angels, why may not they on that account, be called the Saviors of men, as Christ is so called because he conducts them from hell to heaven when they have suffered the full punishment of their sins?

Before I proceed any further, I cannot but make one reflection on this whole hypothesis of salvation on the footing of justice, and not by an atonement made by Christ. How contrary it is to the scripture representations of the scheme of salvation "through Christ," "by the sacrifice of him," "by his blood," "by grace and mercy and forgiveness," "by the mediation and intercession of Christ," and "through him as a Savior!" The one lays a foundation for everlasting gratitude; but on this scheme we can and need give no thanks for our deliverance.

2. It is now time to consider the other supposition before stated, viz. *That those who die in impenitence are finally saved not on the footing of justice, but of the absolute sovereign grace of God, without any respect to the atonement, mediation or intercession of Christ.* With respect to this, several observations occur.

(1) It implies that they deserve not to be saved, and that they might consistently with justice be left in eternal punishment or death; that so to leave them is not at all inconsistent with the divine attributes; and that all arguments from the greatness of the punishment, or from the divine justice and goodness, are to be entirely relinquished. Because the supposition is that they are saved by grace, and not by justice.

(2) This hypothesis implies that an endless punishment is the curse of the law demanded in scripture. For that punishment which is justly due to sin is the very punishment threatened in the law. The law is founded on strict justice, and the very end of the threatening is to point out that punishment which is justly due, or to which the sinner is justly exposed. To suppose

otherwise is to change the law into gospel, and to confound justice and grace.

(3) But where is this expressed in all the sacred scriptures? It is not in the texts already quoted, viz. "that these shall go away into everlasting punishment," "and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever," etc. because these texts assure us that the punishment which they threaten will be actually inflicted, and therefore in this understanding of them, they at once overthrow universal salvation. And if these are not the curse of the law, denouncing an endless punishment I presume no other can be pointed out from scripture which will not equally disprove the salvation of all men.

We have now considered the several particulars which arise from the proposed method of our discourse. We have observed that if all are to be saved, they will be saved either through the atonement of Christ or not; that if they are to be saved through Christ, they will be saved by him, either from endless or from a temporary punishment; and again that if all are not saved through the atonement of Christ, they are to be saved either on the footing of justice, or on the footing of God's absolute grace; and it appears that every one of these various suppositions is irreconcilable with the gospel, and leads to inexplicable difficulties and absurdities. Therefore the doctrine itself from which these absurdities follow, must be false and absurd, and as such must be relinquished by all who mean to embrace a consistent system.

Here, however, it may be objected; that the end of future punishment is not vindictive, but *disciplinary;* and that Christ is made head over all things on purpose to *recover* mankind; that to this end he employs the most proper means, using such as are sufficient to lead some to repentance in this life, while with regard to others he uses those means which will be more effectual in the world to come. On this objection or plea I make the following queries and remarks:

1. Do those who die in sin deserve any more punishment than is sufficient to lead them to repentance, or not? If they *do* deserve more, that more, that greater punishment is the curse of the law. But what punishment is this? Not that everlasting punishment to which the wicked shall actually go, because this being the punishment to which they shall go, is, on the present supposition, that very punishment which is necessary to lead them to repentance. But if the punishment which they justly deserve is a longer punishment than this, where is it threatened? No account can possibly be given of it.

Besides, if they deserve a longer punishment than that which

is sufficient to lead them to repentance, how much longer may it be? Is it still a temporary punishment or an endless one? If a temporary one, this temporary punishment is longer than that which the scripture speaks of as being "forever and ever," and is the very curse of the law. But where is the curse of the law to be found? Where is it threatened? If it be granted that the punishment which the wicked deserve, is so much longer than that which is necessary to lead them to repentance, that it is absolutely endless, then two consequences will follow, both very puzzling to the advocates for universal salvation. The *first* is, that this endless punishment which is the curse of the law, is not, according their sense of scripture, to be found in the law, nor in any part of the bible; and the *second* is, that an endless punishment is perfectly just and consistent with the divine perfections; therefore all arguments against it on that ground are to be abandoned.

2. But if the other part of the dilemma should be espoused, that those who die in sin do *not* deserve any more punishment than is necessary to lead them to repentance, it will follow,

(1) That they are saved without forgiveness. They suffer all that they deserve and therefore there is no room for the exercise of forgiveness or grace. It will follow,

(2) That repentance is the curse of the law. On this supposition all that the law requires of the sinner is repentance. As soon as he renders this, the law is satisfied; and the punishment which is inflicted is not by way of vengeance or wrath, but merely as a wholesome discipline to lead to this. His punishment is no more of a vindictive nature than the afflictions of God's children in this life; nay, no more than the preaching of the gospel, or any of the means of grace. Therefore the sentence of the law is, "If you sin, you shall repent; and you shall, unless you do repent, be subjected to the various means the most excellently adapted to lead you to repentance, that divine wisdom can devise or apply; that is, you shall be cursed with the greatest blessings that you in a state of impenitence can be blessed with until you are cursed with repentance itself, which is the great curse of the divine law, and yet to yourself the greatest blessing. It will follow,

(3) That Christ came to redeem us from repentance. He came to redeem us from the curse of the law; and this being repentance, he came to redeem or save us from it. Yet this is so far from being the curse of the law, from which Christ came to rescue us, that it is one of the chief blessings of the gospel which Christ was exalted on purpose to give.

3. Would it be just to leave sinners to final and endless impen-

itence? If it be just, then it is just to leave them to an endless punishment; for the former necessarily infers the latter. And then the consequences which we have before mentioned will follow, which are that all arguments against endless punishment from the divine perfections, and from the cruelty of such punishment, must be given up; and that a new set of threatenings denouncing an endless punishment as just, and not at the same time assuring us that it will be inflicted, must be discovered in the sacred scriptures. If it be said, that it will not be just to leave a sinner to final impenitence, then when the sinner is brought to repentance, no more is done than an act of justice, which he might demand as his right, and he receives no favor, no forgiveness; and not to give him repentance, and all benefits consistent with wisdom, would be at least as derogatory to the character of our heavenly Father, as it would be to that of an earthly parent, who for some ordinary offence should deliver up his child to the most abandoned courses, without using means to reclaim him and actually to lead him to repentance.

4. How can the idea that future punishment is only disciplinary consist with the various declarations of the scripture that those who die in sin are "lost," "perishing," suffer "perdition," are "cast away," "are burnt up," etc.? While they are in hell they are no more lost, than while they are under the discipline of providence, in this world. Nay, they are with respect to their true interest in no worse situation than they are in this world, but in a vastly better, as they will be under means of grace vastly more conducive to their highest happiness and salvation, than what they enjoy here.

5. How is this hypothesis consistent with the declarations of scripture; that the damned are under the wrath of God; that they are vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; that God will render vengeance to them; that he will reward them according to their deeds, their works, the things done in the body, the fruit of their doings, etc.? Surely these expressions exhibit something more than mere discipline, something vindictive.

6. The sentence pronounced on the damned seems utterly inconsistent with the idea that they are to be liberated each one as soon as he repents. For to all those on the left hand the judge will say "depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." And so in all the other passages in which we are informed of the sentence pronounced on the wicked, there is no intimation that they are doomed to a punishment of various duration, according to the various time of their repentance; but the contrary is everywhere held forth—that all of them alike are to suffer forever!

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If the doctrine of universal salvation cannot be any better reconciled with salvation by Christ, than has been represented, *then neither can it be reconciled with the belief of divine revelation.* I mean not that all who believe in universal salvation are infidels. I allow the contrary. Still that doctrine cannot be assented to consistently with a belief of revelation. They who hold universal salvation, hold that endless punishment is unjust; and that Christ came to redeem us from it. Now who can believe this? They also hold that sinners deserve only a temporary punishment, and that when they have suffered that, they are delivered by grace and mercy. They would be far more consistent if they should renounce revelation entirely.

2. Hence we see that *the doctrine of future endless punishment is not dependent on a few texts only* which are represented to be doubtful, such as these: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," etc. But it is implied in the great main fact of the gospel, the death of Christ to atone for sin, and in the very idea of salvation by Christ; so that there is no accounting for this acknowledged fact, and this conceded doctrine, on the supposition of the salvation of all men. For my part, I should be apprehensive of no danger to what I believe to be the truth, if the whole controversy were rested on this single point, "That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" by the pardon of their sins. Let this one proposition be explained in consistency with the salvation of all men, whether on the supposition of a proper atonement made by Christ or not, and more will be done to establish that doctrine than I have as yet seen done, or than I believe *has been* or *can be* done.

3. The consideration of the tendency of the doctrine of universal salvation to infidelity *should make us cautious of giving a hasty assent to it.* Indeed we ought to be thus cautious, if it did *not* tend to general infidelity; but much more, since it *is* of this tendency. Therefore look well to the consequences before you take the leap. One error is always connected with another, and cannot with any consistency be embraced singly. Look to the end before you enter on the path.

4. Be not induced *suddenly to renounce your former faith, in this, or in any other important article.* Doubtless it is our duty to search after the truth carefully and candidly and embrace it wherever we find it; whether consistent or not with our former belief. Yet we may be too much given to change. I have no ob-

jection to a most thorough inquiry into this subject of the endless punishment of the wicked, and am persuaded that the more it is discussed the more clearly it will appear to be an everlasting truth. What I beseech of you is, that you will be indeed thorough in your inquiry, and deliberate in your determinations.

5. Since there is at least a possibility that the punishment of the wicked may be endless, *be entreated to accept the only offered Savior*. Doing this, you will be safe on every supposition, whether all be finally saved or not. As therefore what I now recommend can be attended with no harm and may be attended with infinite advantage, wisdom and prudence enforce the exhortation. For this you have a precious opportunity; for "now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Now mercy waits, and God waits to be gracious; but once pass the limits of life, and you will find that there is no repentance in the grave, and no salvation from hell.

SERMON XXIX.

CHARITY THE VEIL OF SINS.*

1 PETER 4: 8.—*And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*

THE apostle is in the context exhorting to the practice of various christian duties; especially to the practice of those of the second table of the law, viz. those which either respect mankind in general, or our christian brethren in particular. Such are the duties of hospitality, and what is commonly called *charity* which he mentions immediately after our text. Immediately before the text he mentions sobriety, watchfulness and prayer.

Such are the subjects of which the apostle is treating, not with modern diffuseness, but in that concise manner which is every where to be found in the apostolic writings. Nor was it at all unsuitable, when he was recommending such duties, to introduce that also which he so warmly inculcates in the words of our text. "Above all things," says he, "have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." Here I would, 1. Inquire into the true sense and import of these words, and, 2. Mention some reasons which probably the apostle had in view when he gave this exhortation, and which ought to influence us to the practice of this duty.

I. *I am to inquire into the proper sense and import of these words.*

And as they seem always to have been accounted somewhat obscure and difficult, so I hope I shall be readily excused in being the more particular in this part of my discourse. In order to explain these words it may be proper for us to inquire what we are to understand by "charity," as here used by the apostle; to what extent is it to be exercised; in what sense we are exhorted to have charity above all things; and how it may be said to cover a multitude of sins. If these things be duly explained I think we cannot fail of the true sense and import of the text.

1. We are to inquire *what is to be understood by that chari-*

* First preached in 1772.

ty of which the apostle speaks. This word and words of the like import, are differently understood as they occur in different connections. You doubtless remember that the apostle treats largely of this grace in 1 Cor. 13th, where he particularly declares that whatever other gifts he may be favored with, if he has not this he is nothing. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." And finally in the conclusion of his argument he prefers charity even before faith and hope, two very eminent christian graces. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." In all this chapter, charity has been generally understood to mean a principle of universal love both toward God and his creatures. In the first place towards God as supreme, and then towards his creatures of various ranks according to their excellence and dignity.

Two different senses of the word charity seem to be intimated, as in the 22d chapter of Matthew, where we are commanded to "love the Lord our God with all our heart," etc. and "our neighbor as ourselves." Perhaps it will be needless for me to observe, that the word here translated, "thou shalt love," is immediately derived from that in the forementioned passages translated *charity*, and carries the very same sense and import. In this place therefore charity means, first, a supreme love to God, and secondly, a subordinate love to men, or to mankind in general. There is yet a different sense of this word. It is found in Christ's last discourse to his disciples before his crucifixion, wherein he delivers his new commandment to them. "A new commandment," says he, "I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Here it is plain, that charity is confined to Christ's disciples, those whom he had loved and made the objects of his peculiar complacency. And this love or charity is necessarily different in several respects from any love that we are commanded to exercise towards any other person. Will any one pretend that we are commanded to exercise the same love towards those who are strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and enemies to God by wicked works, as we are towards the true children of God, who are make partakers of the divine nature; as towards

the true disciples of Christ, who are made like him, and of his fulness have received, and grace for grace; as towards those who are made the subjects of the Holy Ghost, and are lead and taught by him? No, it is manifest that those who stand in the relation of children to God, are entitled to a peculiar regard from the relation which they bear to him; that those who are so closely joined to Christ as to become members of his flesh and of his bones, yea to be one spirit with him, are entitled to a peculiar love on these very accounts; that those who are sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God, are entitled to a peculiar respect and affection, because of the truth which dwells in them. Now this peculiar love, respect, complacency, or whatever name we give it, which is to be exercised towards Christ and towards his disciples, and which he enjoined in his new commandment, is I think that very charity to which the apostle exhorts in our text. And this is manifest, if anything need be said to make it manifest, from the consideration of the persons to whom he wrote this epistle, compared with the very words of the text. To whom he wrote this epistle may be seen in chapter 1: 1, 2. From them it appears that they were "the elect of God;" they were sanctified by the Holy Spirit; they were sprinkled with the blood of Christ. And surely these were no other than the disciples of Christ. Let us now compare the light which we obtain from this consideration, with the words of the text. In the text the apostle exhorts those to whom he wrote, who were the true disciples of Christ, to have fervent charity, towards whom? Towards all men; towards the bad as well as the good; towards sinners as well as saints? No, but towards one another. By which it is manifest that charity in the text means that peculiar love between the saints which is enjoined in Christ's new commandment.

2. The next thing proposed was to inquire into *the extent of the duty enjoined in the text.* This in some measure appears from what has been already said, but it may not be amiss to enlarge a little more upon it. It appears then that the apostle does not exhort to exercise, or put on charity towards *all* men. It is indeed our undoubted duty to love all mankind, both good and bad, and even our worst enemies. But we are not to love them all alike, nor with the same kind of love. We ought to love all with a love of benevolence and good will, wishing well to them, and actually doing good to them as we have opportunity. Yet notwithstanding this we are more especially bound to love and do good to the household of faith; whom we are bound to love not only with benevolence, but with delight and complacency. And this love of delight and complacency towards the household

of faith, is the very same as that charity spoken of in the text; and this it is not our duty to have towards any but those who are, or at least appear to be, the true children of God and the true disciples of Christ.

I shall not now undertake particularly to lay before you the evidences at large whereby we may judge others to be the true disciples of Christ. In general the scriptures teach us to know them by their fruits. And the general fruits into which all particular ones may be resolved are these two, a profession of the truth, and a life and conduct corresponding thereto. Unless these two things are found in a man, we cannot rationally esteem him a true christian, nor have christian charity towards him. Let a man therefore make ever so full, clear, particular and understanding a profession of the truth, yet if his temper of mind and conduct of life be apparently different therefrom, we have no right to embrace him in the arms of our charity. Nor any more on the other hand though his visible conduct be ever so correct and according to christian rules, if still he makes not a profession of the truth. For it is the truth which is to make us free. Nor is there any absurdity in supposing that a man may be very moral in his outward conduct, and yet in his heart be an enemy to the cross of Christ.

3. In what sense we are exhorted to have fervent charity among ourselves *above all things*. And though I seldom deliver criticisms on the original text from the pulpit, yet doubtless sometimes it is allowable, and such a time I think the present. The original is πρὸ πάντων δὲ τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες, the literal translation of which is this: "but having fervent charity towards yourselves above all," that is, before all men, in the view of the world. This, I think, is the most natural and simple construction of this passage. Nor do I know of any reason which determined our translators to a different construction, unless it was that they had before given a similar construction of a passage which I suppose they esteemed of the same import with this now under consideration. The passage is Gal. 3: 14, "Above all things put on charity." In the original, ἐπὶ πᾶσι δὲ τούτοις, which I cannot but think ought to have been rendered, "*besides* all these things," etc. As I cannot but think, therefore, that our translators have mistaken the true construction in one case, so no wonder they did in the other. The true rendering of the text therefore I suppose to be this: "And have fervent charity towards one another before, or in the view of all men; for charity covereth a multitude of sins." I say a multitude of sins, and not the multitude, as in our translation; for in the original the article is wanting.

4. In what sense charity is said *to cover a multitude of sins.* You doubtless know that the sense which has been frequently put upon these words is this: that if we exercise charity towards our fellow creatures, and are ready to administer to the supply of their wants, this virtue will in return procure for us the favor of God, and the forgiveness of at least many, if not all our sins. This sense of the words is by some warmly espoused and defended. But the chief reason which they have to urge in behalf of this interpretation is, that the apostle does so strictly and solemnly enjoin the exercise of charity, in that he says, "Above all things have fervent charity." Can we suppose, say they, that the apostle would thus prefer charity and recommend it above all other graces, if it were not of sufficient value in the sight of God to procure the pardon of our sins? Whereas you see we have evaded the whole force of this argument, by what we have before said concerning the true construction of the original text. Indeed the apostle does in the 13th chap. of the 1 Cor. prefer charity before faith, and hope, and all other graces. But we must remember, as before said, that charity there and here do not mean the same thing. There it means the general principle of all grace in the heart; but here only the particular exercise of brotherly love. And not only so, but if charity did include all christian graces, still it would be utterly insufficient to cover our sins in the sense now in question. For it is not our virtue and goodness which covers our sins, but the infinitely meritorious righteousness of Christ the Son of God.

As it appears therefore that this, which has been mentioned, cannot be the true sense of the apostle, I shall now mention some senses wherein charity may be said to cover sins consistently with other passages of scripture.

(1) Charity covers sins, as it influences those who are the subjects of it, to overlook and forgive the sins of others. So the apostle Paul tells us that charity believeth all things, and hopeth all things, that is, is disposed always to believe and hope the best of all men, and consequently to cast a mantle of love over the many failings and imperfections of others. If this be the sense of the apostle, the words πρὸ πάντων will not be emphatical, and the whole verse will run thus: "Before all men have charity towards one another. This you will find very beneficial to you in your christian fellowship, because it will influence you to forgive a multitude of sins and imperfections in one another and in all."

(2) Charity may be said to cover sins, as it has a powerful influence on others to give them a good opinion of us, and to cause

them to overlook many of our short comings. It naturally would have had this effect on the heathen among whom the christians, to whom Peter wrote, lived. Yea, it actually had this effect. It was universally taken notice of among the heathen, how firmly the primitive christians were united in brotherly love; and this appears to have been one means in the hands of God, for bringing about the conversion of many. If this be the sense, the sentiment of the whole verse would be, "Before all men have fervent charity towards one another; for this will make men think favorably of yourselves, and highly of your religion." This suggests,

(3) Another sense in which charity may be said to cover a multitude of sins; as it is a powerful means of conviction to others of the truth of religion, and so by the divine blessing a means of their conversion from sin to holiness, and consequently of preventing all that sin into which otherwise they would fall. In this case it may be said that charity covers sins as it prevents them. And it is worthy of particular observation, that he that converteth another, is said, in this sense, to cover his sins. James 5: 19, 20, "Brethren," says the apostle, "if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins;" that is, he shall prevent a multitude of sins which otherwise he would fall into, and also be the means of his past sins being forgiven and blotted out through Christ. If the apostle intended that we should take him in this last sense, then the whole verse will be of this import: "Have fervent charity towards one another before all men, because your charity will be a powerful means of conviction of others, and by the divine blessing may be effectual to their conversion, and so a means both of procuring the pardon of their past sins, and of preventing many which otherwise they would commit in the future."

Thus I have endeavored to clear these words of the false sense which by some has been affixed to them, and to point out several senses in which they may be understood in consistency with other passages of scripture. Having thus in some manner gone through what was proposed under our first head, I proceed,

II. *To mention some reasons which probably the apostle had in view in giving this exhortation, and which ought to influence us to the practice of this charity.*

1. It tends *to mutual peace and comfort.* When this charity is wanting among christians, they lose all the benefit and comfort of christian fellowship. They can have no mutual confidence, no free conversation on spiritual things, no brotherly counsels,

admonitions or exhortations; none of the duties of christians towards each other can be fully put into operation. The consequence is that they lose all the benefit of mutual sympathy and christian intercourse, and of the watch and care of each other. And not only so but mutual jealousies soon begin to prevail, and evil surmisings with regard to each other; and from evil surmisings soon springs a firm belief corresponding to these surmisings; and from this belief comes evil speaking; and from evil speaking, wrath and violent contentions. And then as the apostle James informs us "where envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work." By these means therefore christians not only often lose the comforts of religion, but frequently fall into temptation and sin, and wound the cause of Christ and their own souls. This therefore is a sufficient reason why we should exercise not only charity in general towards each other, but also why we should have it in a fervent degree; for in proportion as its degree is small, in the same proportion shall we fail of these beneficial consequences and incur the contrary evils.

2. It is required by *the honor of Christ and his religion* which we profess. These are greatly concerned in this affair, as is evident from what I have already said on this subject. But I would enlarge a little more on this head before I leave it. If christianity be a reality, and the doctrine thereof be true, and if it teaches that christians are all children of one common father, redeemed by one blood, members of the same body, and heirs of the same blessings and kingdom, what else could be expected of them than that they should have fervent charity towards one another? Even the heathen standing by and beholding only as spectators may well expect to find this the fact; and so may all these who are without. And if they find it otherwise; if instead of such fervent charity, they find that professors of christianity care little about each other, and have no more love or complacency in each other than they have in others who are without; if they find among them mutual jealousies, animosities, wrath and contention what must they conclude? It will doubtless be natural for them to say, surely these men are not the men they pretend to be; surely there is nothing in the doctrines they profess; viz. that they are all heirs of the same kingdom, children of the same father, having the same spirit dwelling in and actuating them all. For if so it would be impossible but that this same spirit should unite, close in with, and embrace itself in the arms of charity. This is doubtless a just inference; and so far as this appears to be fact, so far christianity appears a reality in the view of the world, and so far they have the means of conviction lying before

them. But so far as the fact is otherwise, so far it appears in a dishonorable light, as a mere pretence or system of hypocrisy. Thus the honor of religion and of Jesus Christ, the founder of the gospel, is immediately affected by our want of charity. No wonder then that the apostle so warmly enjoins the practice of it in the text.

3. Another reason for the same thing is *the mutual edification of christians among themselves.* How can they either grow in grace themselves or edify one another, if they fail in this duty? If they fail in this charity, they fail in what is everywhere represented as a most important part of the christian character, and an exercise which immediately results from the christian spirit. The christian spirit is a spirit of love or charity. Hence love is said to be greater than either faith or hope. And the first and great commandment of the law is, that we "love the Lord our God with all our heart," and then the second which is like unto it is, that "we love our neighbor as ourselves." And because a spirit of love is so great and essential a part of the christian character, therefore the apostle tells us though a man should speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, he is become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though he have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though he have all faith, so that he can remove mountains, and yet be destitute of a principle of love, he is nothing. And finally though he should bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and give his body to be burned, if yet he be destitute of a spirit of love, it shall profit him nothing. If therefore this spirit of love bears this place in the christian character, how can it be expected that christians destitute of its exercise towards one another, should either advance themselves in the divine life, or profit one another?

4. I might also mention as another reason for the same thing, *the conviction and conversion of others.* But as I have already touched upon this, I shall say nothing further of it at present. And as the reasons already given may be sufficient to show the reasonableness and obligation of this duty, I would close with some improvement of the subject.

If it is such an important part of christian duty to live in the exercise of charity towards one another as fellow christians, then it is also our duty to live in the exercise and discharge of those things which are the proper fruits and effects of charity. These are as much our duty as charity itself. Let us therefore for a moment consider what are the genuine fruits of this amiable christian virtue. I mean especially on the part of christians to-

wards one another. For it is of this exercise of charity that the apostle is speaking in the text as we before showed. One of these fruits is,

1. That we *watch over one another for our mutual good.* The apostle tells the christians to whom he wrote, " I am jealous over you with a holy jealousy." And doubtless herein he exercised this charity which is so warmly recommended in the text. He dearly loved his fellow christians; and knowing at the same time the infirmity of the flesh, to which he was aware they were in some degree subject, he was jealous over them. And herein it becomes us to imitate him, and to be jealous over one another, and to watch over one another. Indeed it becomes us in the first place to be jealous over ourselves and to watch ourselves, as to the exercises and operations, the biases and inclinations of our own hearts, and the fruit and practice which most naturally flow from them. But while we watch over ourselves, we are by no means to neglect our christian brethren. There are duties incumbent upon us towards them, which are by no means to be omitted. We are not to seek merely our own good ; but every one the good of his brethren. And of all the various duties which christian brethren owe to another, that of a mutual watch and care is by no means the least important. And this is no more than the proper fruit and effect of charity. If we love our brethren as we ought to do, we shall naturally be careful and watchful of their conduct, lest they wound and dishonor themselves as christians, and the solemn profession which they have made. If therefore we are bound to the exercise of charity itself, we are also bound to the discharge of this its proper fruit.

2. Another fruit of charity is *that we counsel and exhort one another* on all proper occasions. That charity does dictate this, is I think manifest. For if we love our brethren as we ought, how can we avoid giving them our best counsel and advice, as occasion and opportunity shall present? Certainly to do otherwise would be an evidence, not of charity but of the want of it. And the apostle also expressly inculcates this duty in Heb. 3: 13, " Exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Here the apostle both gives the exhortation, and adds the reason ; viz. the danger there was lest they should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

3. Another fruit of the same principle is that *we warn, correct and admonish one another,* when there is need. This arises from the same principle of love, which will lead us to this, as to either of the former fruits. For if we dearly love our chris-

tian brethren we shall be willing to take any steps, or use any means with them which shall be for their good. And that admonition, correction and christian discipline are necessary for the good of christians, at some times, I believe none will deny. We are therefore absolutely bound by the law of brotherly love to admonish, correct, and use all the steps of christian discipline with one another as there shall be occasion. In how different a light therefore does the affair of christian discipline appear when viewed according to truth from that in which it is viewed by many. Many seem to conceive of it as a malicious thing for one christian brother to enter upon a process of discipline with respect to another. Whereas the truth is, it is the very dictate of love itself; and the more we love one another, the more ready shall we be to admonish and discipline one another, on all proper occasions. And when this is entirely neglected among brethren, it is a strong argument that this grace is at a very low ebb. Yea, it is an argument, at least in these degenerate days of the church, that christians have not a proper sense either of the obligations of this law of Christ which so expressly enjoins discipline, or of the honor of Christ and his cause, which are so immediately concerned in this affair. And as we are bound to do these things, so wherein we have fallen short of them, either as individuals in a church, or as a church, an ecclesiastical body, we are bound to reflect upon our conduct, to repent of what is past, and for the future to reform. And let us remember that there is, and can be no true repentance without reformation.

4. I shall mention but one more fruit of christian charity or brotherly love; and that is, *that it will lead us to distribute to our brethren in Christ according to their necessity and our ability.* We are to do good in this way to all men, but are under more particular obligations to those who are of the household of faith. This duty is much inculcated in the scriptures. Thus the apostle directs Timothy to "charge them that are rich to do good, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;" and again in writing to the Hebrews, he says, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister." And innumerable other passages there are to the same purpose. And they are enforced also with very powerful motives; particularly in 1 Tim 6: 18, upon which the apostle adds in verse 19, "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

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ARTICLES FROM THE THEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE.

ARTICLES, ETC.

MERIT OF VIRTUE AND DEMERIT OF SIN.

It has been supposed by some, that if the *demerit* of sin be infinite, the *merit* of the creature's virtue must also, by a parity of reason, be infinite. A little attention, however, to the *rule* by which, in general, we are to estimate the merit and demerit of actions, may convince us that this is not the case: and *this* must be the *good* or the *evil* they produce or effect. If this be the rule by which we are to estimate moral actions, the supposition that the merit of the creature's virtue is infinite, because the demerit of his sin is said to be so, will imply, that the creature is capable of doing as much *good* as *hurt*. For, if a creature be capable of doing more hurt than good, it is manifest that the *demerit* of his wickedness may exceed the *merit* of his virtue; and *that* in proportion to the excess of the mischief. It is often said, and that justly, that a man may do more hurt in an hour, than he can repair in an age. The demerit of his wickedness must then proportionably exceed the merit of his virtue. A single person may destroy the peace, and excite the fears and terror of a whole neighborhood or society; and in that way, cause a degree of misery and distress very far exceeding the happiness which will naturally arise from any virtuous action whatever which he is capable of performing.

If a man committed robbery or murder, and there were no power or authority sufficient to restrain or punish the culprit, the whole community would immediately suffer, and every one feel both property and life to be insecure. Thus, one sinner would destroy much good. So, also, should any one rise up in rebellion against the *divine* government, and there were no one at the head of the system, either sufficiently powerful, or inclined, to restrain wickedness, and punish the criminal; every creature would, of course, feel insecure under the government of God; and confidence could be no longer placed in him. The happiness of the whole system would, consequently, be at an eternal end. This would be the natural fruit and consequence of rebellion against God, did he not possess both *power and will* abundantly sufficient

to restrain wickedness, and to secure the system against the otherwise fatal effects of it.

But if sin, *through the power and interposition of God*, fail of producing these doleful effects, is it therefore the less sinful? If it be; then, should God, in infinite wisdom and goodness, overrule all the moral evil which takes place, to the greater good and happiness of the system, there would be no sinfulness or criminality at all in it. Because the wisdom of government is such as to overrule a theft, a murder, or a rebellion, to the greater security and happiness of the community at large, would it thence follow, that neither theft, murder, nor rebellion, have any criminality in them? No more is the evil of sin lessened by the consideration of its otherwise fatal effects being prevented by the power and wisdom of God.

The happiness of multitudes would be endangered and destroyed by one sinner, were it not for the interposition of some foreign and superior power. The demerit of sin must, therefore, be supposed to be in proportion to the *natural evil* which, in a common course of things, would be its certain and necessary effects, *without the interposition of any foreign extrinsic power.*

If this be the rule by which we are to estimate the *demerit* of sin, it would of course seem that the *merit* of virtue ought to be estimated by the *natural good*—the *felicity* which, in a common course of things, it will effect, *without any interruption from any extrinsic or foreign influence.* According to this rule of estimating the *demerit* of sin, and the *merit* of the *creature's* virtue, the disproportion will appear to be unspeakably great. One sinner will spread misery far and wide; and unless the consequences be prevented by some foreign power, the *natural evil* of his wickedness will know neither bound nor end.

On the other hand, how inadequate are the powers and virtue of a *creature* to a proportionable diffusion of *happiness*, even though they meet with no interruption from any foreign influence whatever?

Should it be said, that, as others will naturally experience the unhappy consequences of the rebellion of a sinner; so, others will also naturally enjoy the happy fruits of the obedience and virtue of the righteous—it being the nature of benevolent affection to rejoice in all the good that is done, by whomsoever it be performed; it may be replied, that without the interposition of God, the virtuous would be made miserable by the conduct of the wicked; and *that*, without any *vice* of their own. But how small a degree of good is any virtuous *creature* capable of doing to others, without the exercise of virtuous affection in them also,

to make them to partake in it? It is true, that the virtuous do, in fact, partake in all the good they know to be done, whether it be done immediately to themselves, or to others. But it is only the exercise of their benevolent affection that gives them the enjoyment of the good which is done to others.

It is not the *vice* of the obedient that they *suffer* by the *wickedness* of others; for a robbery, or a murder, will alarm the fears of the innocent, and create pain in them. But it is the *virtue* of the righteous that gives them to *enjoy the good* which is done to others. The *evil* of sin is to be estimated by the miseries it produceth *without the concurrence of the wickedness of others.* By the same rule the *worth* of the creature's virtue is to be estimated by the good which, in a natural course of things, it *effecteth*, without the concurrent aids of the *goodness* of others.

The *pain*, therefore, to which the innocent are subjected by the *wickedness* of others, necessarily comes into consideration in estimating the *demerit* of transgression. But the happiness occasioned in the innocent, by the good deeds *done to others*, arises from the exercise of *their own virtuous affection.* This happiness is, therefore, not to come into consideration, in estimating the *worth* of the good deeds done.

The virtue of others in *enjoying* a good deed done by me, not immediately to themselves, is not to be set to the score of my merit in doing it. Nor doth the *innocence* of others, who suffer by my wickedness, at all extenuate my crime in committing it.

If, therefore, sin *have infinite demerit*, it will, by no just rule of reasoning, from thence follow, that the *merit* of the *creature's* virtue is also infinite.

[*Some strictures were made by an able anonymous writer upon the above article. The nature of his objections will be seen from the following reply of Dr. Edwards.*]

Mr. Editor,—It is a matter of some importance, that the rule by which we are to estimate the *merit* of virtue, and the *demerit* of vice, should be understood. This rule, it is supposed by a writer in the *third number* of your Magazine, page 222, was not properly stated and defined in a little piece, which appeared in your *first*, on the subject.

The writer of that piece did not think it essential to his general design to give a labored and critical definition of the terms *merit* and *demerit*. He used these terms, as they are frequently used in common conversation, to express the *useful* and the

hurtful nature of *virtue* and *vice*—just as the Remarker uses one of those terms, when he asks a place for his thoughts on the subject, in your Magazine, if you shall be of opinion they *merit* it. The *worth* of virtue, he then apprehended, and still apprehends, consists in its *usefuluess* to the public interest; and, the *hatefulness* of vice, in its being *detrimental* to general good and happiness. Had the inquiry been, whether the creatures' *virtue* be equally *useful* or *beneficial* to the moral system, as his *vice* is *injurious* and *hurtful*; the arguments, in that little tract, would have applied to equal advantage.

When it is said that the merit of virtue is in proportion to the natural good which, *in a common course of things*, it will effect; and the demerit of vice, in proportion to the natural evil which, in *a similar way*, it would produce; this might well enough have been understood, as it was designed, to be explanatory of what was before said, viz. that the *good* or the *evil*, which actions produce or effect, must be the rule by which we estimate their merit or demerit. On a review of what was published, the writer does not find any other variation of his definitions. That the evil to which vice *tends*, in distinction from what, *in a common course of things* it would actually produce; or, that the good which *virtue* would effect *if it could*, and the evil which *vice* would effect if *it* could, are either of them the rule by which we are to estimate either the merit of the *former* or the demerit of the *latter*, is no where said in that little tract.

But the writer, who remarks on the piece under consideration, says that, if the virtue of a *third person*, in enjoying the benefit *by me* conferred on some one who stands in need, is not to come into the account in estimating the worth of *my goodness* in doing the kindness, it will follow, that neither has my own goodness any merit in it, *because a susceptibility of benefits is essential, in another, in order to his receiving any good* from me. Can this inference be just? Is there nothing really praise-worthy in rejoicing in the good which is done to others? Does it detract anything from the *real worth* of the virtue of this third person, that it is in good done, *not immediately to himself*, that he rejoices? And, does the praise-worthiness of his virtue belong, not to him who exercises it, but to me, who have been, indirectly, the occasion of its being exercised? It is very manifest that *his* virtue neither detracts from, nor adds to, the worth of my virtue in conferring a benefit on one who stood in need. But, because *another* is as truly praise-worthy for exercising benevolent affection, as *I am*, will it thence follow, that the *sensibility* of a needy person to pleasure, *which* has nothing either *virtuous*

or *vicious* in it, in the least degree diminishes the worth of my virtue in doing kind offices to him?

The Remarker will, probably, be sensible, upon a review of the subject, that there is not the least ground for such an inference. According to his own statement, there is a good, in fact, done by A; and B receives and enjoys it, and *that* whether he be *virtuous* or *vicious*. The merit of the virtue of A, in doing this good, must therefore belong to *him*. If C, by the exercise of a virtuous disposition, enjoys it, the praise-worthiness of this virtuous disposition is certainly his; while a *mere sensibility* of pleasure and pain has nothing of a moral nature in it.

But in this writer's critical definition of the terms *merit* and *demerit*, it is apprehended there are some defects, and some of his observations are hardly capable of defence. He says, that *merit* involves a right to *demand* a reward; but, *demerit*, no right to *demand* punishment;—that *justice* turns over the sinner to the sovereign disposal of him whom he has offended, and that a *less* punishment than is deserved may be inflicted. These are not exactly his words; but, if I understand him, this is the import of what he says. This would imply, that *justice* does not so much require *vice to be punished*, as *virtue to be rewarded*. If sin against God merely *exposes* to punishment, and *less than is deserved* may be inflicted, why will it not follow, that justice doth not *demand* that *any punishment at all* shall be inflicted? And if it do not *demand it*, what evidence is there that it will ever be inflicted? If justice demand that any punishment whatever should be inflicted, it demands the whole which is deserved, as much as any part. If justice, and the good of the universe, do not as much *demand* that the Deity express his displeasure against the sinner, by inflicting *natural evil* upon him, and *that* too equal to his desert, as much as it is possible that equity should give a right, in any case whatever, to *demand* a reward; why is it necessary that the displeasure of the Deity should ever be expressed in *any natural evil*? Why might not sin have been forgiven without an *atonement*?

Where a *reward* is due, the right of demand lies in him to whom it is due. But, where *punishment is deserved*, the right of demand that it should be inflicted lies in the party injured; and, in case of sin against God, the right of demand lies in him, in the whole universe which is injured by the sinner. And *that justice* which guards the interest of the universe, and seeks the general good, as really *demands* punishment, as a meritorious action can, in any case whatever, *demand* a reward.

A sinner, when possesed of a properly penitent disposition,

sees the beauty, and feels the importance of *justice*. Justice appears to him to have *real demands*; and he views it as of infinite importance to the good of the universe, that these demands should be satisfied. And though the demands of justice be against *himself*, his benevolence to the universe still as really calls for their being satisfied, as true virtue ever calls for a *reward*.

Further observations upon the subject would, perhaps, be neither instructive nor entertaining to your readers.

MODERN LIBERALITY.

The liberality of the present age is so extravagant that it runs into many absurdities; one of which is, that we are to teach no particular system of religion, but either teach no system at all, or every system alike. This is plainly implied in the common doctrine so much insisted on by many, that nothing ought to be done to bias the minds of men in religion, but that they ought to be entirely free from every bias or influence in favor of any one particular doctrine or system of religion rather than another. Now, all teaching of any doctrine or system of religion, is an attempt to persuade and incline those who are taught, to receive that doctrine or system. Of course, if nothing is to be done to bias the mind of any man in favor of any doctrine, no doctrine is to be taught. But that this is both contradictory to the express commands of scripture, and absurd in the eye of reason, I presume every man will grant who gives himself the trouble to think. It is as absurd to imagine that the most likely way for a man to become truly religious, is to be taught nothing concerning religion, as it is to imagine that the most likely way for a man to become a great mathematician or philosopher, is to be taught nothing concerning mathematics or philosophy; or that a man who is taught nothing concerning a particular mechanic business, is the most likely to become an accomplished artist in that business.

Or if it be said, that we ought to teach religion indeed, but should teach every kind or system of religion alike, and then leave men to judge for themselves; I observe, that this seems to be as absurd, as to teach a man every kind of mechanic art equally, as the most direct way to make him a good shoe-maker.

Corollary. Hence we see the impropriety of putting books on every subject, and containing arguments equally for and against

the truth, into the hands of people in general. What is this but teaching them every doctrine of truth and falsehood equally, in order to lead them into the truth? And this is as absurd, as to teach a man the trade of a blacksmith or a carpenter, in order to make him a tailor.

THE DIVINE VENGEANCE.

God in scripture tells us, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay;" "I will *avenge* me of mine adversaries;" "I will recompense *fury* to mine enemies," etc. Now, many are strongly prejudiced against these expressions, and grievously offended at them. The reason doubtless is, that they misapprehend their meaning. They conceive that they mean the same which is commonly meant by the same words among men; viz. a selfish, malicious and furious passion. But, in truth, those scriptural expressions mean no more than that God, as a righteous governor and judge, will, according to strict justice, punish all rebels against his government, so far as the general good of his kingdom, which is the intellectual universe, requires. If a wise, just and good judge punish a criminal according to justice and the requirements of the state, he may be said to avenge the state, or himself as the head and representative of the state on those criminals, and to repay or recompense them for the injury they have done the state. And surely such vengeance is nothing inconsistent with the most perfect moral goodness.

THE SALVATION OF THE HEATHEN.

In favor of the salvation of the heathen, it is sometimes said, if a heathen be truly virtuous and holy, what will become of him? Will he be cast off merely because he is ignorant of Christ; though if he had known him, he would most cheerfully have received him as his Savior? On this I observe, no doubt if any heathen be truly virtuous and holy; if he love God supremely, as an infinitely great, wise, holy and good God, and his neighbor as himself, he will be saved. But the question is, whether any such persons can be found among the heathen. Of the heathen philosophers *Socrates* is commonly selected as the best and most likely to be a saint. But it is generally granted, that he allowed

of unnatural lust, and lived in it himself. *Plato* was a mere temporiser in religion; *Cicero* was a most vain-glorious creature; and not one of all the ancient philosophers appears by his writings or otherwise, to have possessed that sense of sin, that spirit of humility and repentance, which, according to the scriptures, is so essential to the character of a good man. Therefore we have no evidence that any one of them was possessed of true virtue or holiness, and on that ground there is no reason to believe, that any of them are saved.

Nor does it appear, that ever any of the heathen had just ideas of virtue or true moral goodness, as existing in men. Humility, repentance, forgiveness of injuries, loving our enemies, etc. appear not to have entered into their ideas of a good man. And if they had not just ideas of moral goodness in men, we may be sure that they had not just ideas of it in God, and of those perfections which constitute the glory of his character. And until we find a heathen, who has just ideas of true virtue in men, it is an idle and groundless conjecture, that any heathen ever ascribed to the *material sun*, "the power, wisdom, goodness, holiness, justice and grace of the true God," and loved and worshipped it in this view. A person who should ascribe such attributes to the sun, and should love and worship it on account of those attributes, would be a friend to true virtue and holiness, would himself practise true virtue, and lead a life of holiness, would therefore be a humble penitent, as well as a moral man, and in his account of true virtue or moral goodness would express his ideas correspondently to the forementioned moral attributes, which he ascribes to the *sun*. But such a heathen has not yet appeared. Let him be pointed out, and it will be of more weight in the argument, than a thousand conjectures.

BENEVOLENCE OF GOD IN INFLICTING PUNISHMENT.

It is often mentioned as a self-evident proposition, as an axiom of great importance, and a fundamental truth, that ***God has made no man to be damned.*** But the truth or falsehood of this proposition depends entirely on the sense of it. Doubtless God made every man with some definite design, and for some determinate end. And if he did not make any man with a design that he should be damned, he made him with a design that he should not be damned. Therefore, either all men are finally saved, or else the design of God in the creation of some men is frustrated,

and he fails of the end at which he aimed, and which he intended to accomplish. None, it is presumed, will assert the latter, and none but universalists the former. Yet it is frequently maintained by those who are not universalists, that *God has made no man to be damned.*

Will it not be allowed, that God has made some men to have the tooth-ache, others to have the small-pox, others to have the yellow fever, and others to have the plague? Will it be denied, that God made all men to die; some to die in battle, others to be drowned, others to be consumed in their own houses, others to be tortured to death by savages? If these things will not be denied, where is the absurdity of supposing that God has made some to suffer the pains of hell? If, indeed, the pains of hell be not deserved by any man, we may boldly assert, that God, who is perfectly just, has made no man to suffer these pains. But allowing that any do deserve them, by what argument shall we prove, that God has not made some men to suffer them in the same sense that he has made some to die with the yellow fever, to be drowned, or to be burnt to death?

It is granted, that to have the yellow fever, to be drowned, and to be consumed, is not the ultimate end of any man's creation. Nor is damnation the ultimate end of any man's creation. The yellow fever, and all diseases and deaths, are designed ultimately to subserve the divine glory and the good of the creation. Just so with regard to damnation; it will never be inflicted on any man, but with an ultimate design to subserve the same important ends.

If, therefore, when it is asserted that God never made any man to be damned, the meaning be, that God never made any man with an ultimate view to his damnation, this is granted; but if the meaning be, that God never made any man with a design that, in consequence of his own sin and desert of damnation, he should suffer it, and thereby promote the general good and the divine glory; this is as false as to assert that God never made any man with a design that he should have the yellow fever, and thereby promote the general good and the divine glory.

Some seem to imagine that if God damn any man, he does it from a malicious disposition, such a disposition as men are apt to indulge in revenging the injuries which they have received. And on this ground they argue in favor of universal salvation. They say that God is good, and it is absurd to suppose that he is malicious, and disposed to revenge himself on his creatures; and therefore it is absurd to suppose that he damns them.

That it is absurd to suppose that God is in the least degree

malicious or revengeful, in the sense in which that word is commonly used among men, is granted; but that the damnation of a sinner implies malice or a revengeful spirit, is not granted. It no more implies such a spirit than those dispensations of providence, by which the yellow fever, or any pestilence, or death in any form is brought on men. We might just as well argue, that because God is good and not disposed to malice and revenge, therefore it is absurd to suppose that he sends the yellow fever, or any how kills men. It must be granted by all who believe the existence and perfection of God, that whenever he sends on his creatures any calamity, sickness or death, he does it from the purest goodness and benevolence, to the system of intelligences. On the same principles we have a right to argue, that whenever he inflicts damnation on any creature, he is actuated by the same goodness and benevolence.

Is it to be supposed that when a judge of established justice and goodness condemns a murderer to the gibbet, he is actuated by malice and revenge? It will be granted that he may be actuated by the most entire benevolence to his country and the citizens in general. Therefore, certainly the judge of all the earth, who will do right, may, in condemning a creature to any just punishment, be actuated by an entire benevolence to his creatures in general.

PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

An answer to the Question, "What is that Asking for the Holy Spirit, to which the Communication of it is promised?"

The text referred to in this question is Luke 9: 13, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Nothing is more discouraging to sinners, than the idea, that though they be disposed to a return and reconciliation to God, yet he on his part will not be reconciled to them. This is the idea of many; and on this ground they justify themselves in their impenitence and final perdition. They plead that they are willing to be reconciled to God, yet cannot obtain his grace and favor. But how contrary to the text just quoted is this idea?

We all know the power of natural affection in parents, and how readily they give good things to their children. They very often do it unasked, but especially when their children dutifully

ask them. Yet this text assures us, that God is *much more ready* to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than the most affectionate earthly parent is to give good things to his children when they, in a proper manner, ask him.

But the object of our inquiry is, that *asking* or *praying* for the Holy Spirit, to which the promise of the communication of it is made.

The object of this asking is the Holy Spirit; and to have this Spirit is to be sanctified, to be made holy, to be delivered from the dominion and from the love of sin, and to become the subject of the love of holiness and true virtue. Let us descend to particulars, and consider several classes of sinners, and what is necessarily implied in their asking for the Holy Spirit.

The drunkard, in asking for this Spirit, asks to be delivered from his inordinate love of strong drink, and to be preserved from the gratification of that appetite. He who is addicted to carnal desires, in praying for the Holy Spirit, prays that all inordinate desires of that kind in him may be prevented or extinguished. The malicious prays that he may be preserved from the exercise of malice; the avaricious, that he may be preserved from avarice; the proud, that he may be preserved from pride; the man of the world, that he may be preserved from the love of the world; the unconverted, that he may be converted, and delivered from the influence of sinful principles in general; and the true christian, that he may be edified in faith and holiness.

Now, for these characters respectively really to ask or pray for the Holy Spirit, is sincerely to desire or wish for the several things just mentioned; and in general, to ask for the Spirit, is to desire and wish to be preserved from the commission of sin, to be delivered from the principles of sin, and to be made the subject of the principles of holiness.

Doubtless, the asking intended in the text is a sincere and not a hypocritical asking. And what is a sincere asking but that which is attended with a real desire of the thing asked? It is illustrated in the text by a child's asking bread of his parent. When the child is hungry, he asks for bread sincerely and heartily; i. e. he really desires the bread for which he asks. Now if we ask for the Holy Spirit, and its effects with the same sincerity and real desire, with which a hungry child asks bread of his parent, we shall undoubtedly obtain it.

A hungry child asks bread from appetite and direct desire; not because it is useful and necessary for the preservation of its life or health, but because it is pleasant and agreeable in itself. In this manner must we desire the Holy Spirit, and the sanctify-

ing effects of it; we must desire them not merely because they are necessary to our safety and escape from misery, but because they are in themselves agreeable to us. This is loving holiness for holiness sake, and with a love which would be the same if no punishment were to be the consequence of the neglect of holiness and indulgence of sin, or if holiness were not necessary to escape punishment.

Such a love and desire of holiness as this, is very different from a desire of it merely because it is a mean of safety; as a desire of knowledge or natural wisdom, for the pleasure of it, is very different from the desire of it for the advantages which it affords to increase our property or to succeed our ambitious views; as the desire of a neighbor's prosperity, from real benevolence and friendship, is very different from the desire of the same object, because it affords a prospect of gain to ourselves; and as a desire of food for appetite is very different from the desire of a tasteless and nauseous medicine, because it is necessary to our life or health.

That *asking*, in the text under consideration, does not and cannot mean less than we have represented, seems plain from bare attention to the subject. Any desire of holiness short of this is a mere *hypocritical* desire, a mere *selfish* desire, such as the most undutiful and unnatural child may have of the prosperity of his father, merely that he may share in that prosperity. Such a temper and such a desire as this is consistent with prevailing and governing selfishness, nay, with the most depraved principles of which human nature is susceptible. And can it be supposed, that the promises of the Holy Spirit, of sanctification and salvation, which are connected with it, are made to such desires and such principles as these? This, it is presumed, will not be pretended.

That such asking as has been supposed to be implied in the text under consideration, will secure the communication of the Holy Spirit, appears from this, that it implies all those graces, to which the promises of the gospel, in general, are made.

1. It implies sincere love to God. He who asks in the manner described, the Holy Spirit to sanctify him, desires holiness as such, and rejoices in it. Of course he will rejoice in the perfect and infinite holiness of God, and in God himself. But this implies reconciliation and true love to God. And the promises are made to those who love God. Prov. 8: 17, "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." John 14: 21, "He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Verse 23, "If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

2. It implies true repentance. He who loves holiness hates sin, and therefore repents of it, and his repentance will be just as true, sincere and genuine, as his love of holiness. But the promises of the gospel are made to repentance: "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3: 19, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13: 3, "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy."

3. It implies faith in Christ. This is a cordial receiving of Christ as our Savior. But they who love God. love Christ; and they who love Christ, will cordially and gladly receive him as their Savior; which is faith in him. But to faith all the promises are made, as is well known; and God fulfils his promises more readily than any earthly parent gives bread or other good things to his children.

If these observations concerning praying for the Spirit be just, we see the reason why so many who pray for it, receive it not. The reason is, that their prayers are insincere. They desire not the Spirit itself, and the sanctifying effects of it, but merely the advantages, the safety, peace and honor which are connected with the communication of the Spirit.

Hence also we see, that if any receive not the Holy Spirit, in his sanctifying influences, and be not saved, they ought to take the whole blame to themselves; for if they sincerely asked for this Holy Spirit, they would receive it and be saved.

We further see the unreasonableness of those who complain that they have been long asking, seeking and praying for the Spirit, but have not obtained it; that they have been long waiting at the throne of grace, lying at the pool, all the while desiring and wishing for the Spirit to sanctify them; but all in vain; with all their prayers and strivings they have not been able to obtain it. Now, the unreasonableness of this complaint appears from this, that in truth they have never once sincerely asked for the Holy Spirit; and the only proper object of their prayers, desires and strivings has been their own safety and happiness. But so long as they do not sincerely and directly ask or desire the Holy Spirit, it is perfectly unreasonable for them to complain that they do not receive it.

THE PROOF OF THE MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD, FROM THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

It is a principal argument to prove, from the light of nature, and without revelation, the moral perfection of God, that there is

more happiness in the world than misery, more good than evil. On this I observe, 1. That there is no certain evidence that this is a fact. It has been long disputed by philosophers, and the voice of scripture seems to be against it. Says the wise man, "I praised the dead that are already dead, more than the living that are yet alive. Yea, better than they both is he that hath not been, who hath not seen all the evil that is done under the sun."

2. If it were ever so true and manifest, that there is more happiness in the world than misery, how does it hence follow, that God is a being of entire perfect and infinite goodness? Would a parent, who needlessly torments his child one day, and gratifies him in every thing for the two preceding days, and so on through life, be entitled to the character of a perfectly good parent? Or, is a man who observes the rules of justice two thirds of his time, and practices fraud and injustice the other third, a perfectly just man?

Therefore, of all arguments to prove the moral perfections of God, this is perhaps the weakest; though it is much insisted on by Clarke, Price, Priestley, Chauncey, and most other writers on this subject.

If, indeed, the evil which is in the world be finally made subservient to greater good than could otherwise be obtained, the difficulty vanishes. But in this case we need not insist that there is less evil in the world than good. Let the evil be ever so predominant, it is no ground of objection to the perfect and infinite goodness of God, provided it all be finally made subservient to greater good than could have been accomplished in any other way. But how shall we, without the aid of revelation, obtain knowledge, that the evil which is in the world, whether it be more or less than the good, shall be made subservient to greater good than could have been accomplished in any other way? If the light of nature afford evidence of this, it affords evidence of the perfect goodness of God. Otherwise what evidence of this does it afford, from the consideration of the good which is in the world?

Another argument to prove the moral perfection of God is deduced from his omniscience and omnipotence. It is said, that as God perfectly knows everything, he knows the nature, the relations, and fitnesses of things; he knows the nature, fitness, and beauty, of virtue, and therefore must choose and love it; and the choice and love of virtue is virtue or moral goodness. As to this I observe, if by the knowledge of the fitness and beauty of virtue be meant more than a mere *intellectual*, or as it is commonly called, *speculative* knowledge of it, more is taken into the divine omniscience than is granted to be contained in it, and the

very question is begged. It is not granted, that omniscience involves that apprehension of the beauty of virtue, which implies the direct love of it. If this be indeed involved in it, let it be proved, and the point will be gained. And until this is proved, what evident connection is there between omniscience and the love and practice of virtue or moral goodness? We find by experience, that in men there is no established connection of this kind. The most acute and the most learned are often the most vicious. A man who knows that virtue is right and fit, and that it is most for his own interest, in the long-run, to practise it, yet is often devoted to vice. His vicious bias entirely overcomes his judgment. In the case before us, the very question is, whether the Deity be not an evil being, and consequently under the government of an evil bias. If he be, this may effectually counteract the dictates of omniscience, as well with respect to the happiness of the Deity himself, as with respect to the general fitness and obligation of virtue. Indeed, so long and so far as any being is under the influence of a vicious bias, he does not, he cannot enjoy happiness in the practice of virtue. Therefore, even omniscience will not inform such a being, that while he remains evil as he is, it would promote his happiness to pursue any other line of conduct than that which he does pursue. Therefore omniscience will not dictate to such a being, to practice virtue in order to promote *his* happiness, that happiness which alone is any happiness *to him*, or which he relishes. Omniscience does indeed inform him, that if he were of a different bias or taste, a different line of conduct would afford him happiness, and more happiness than that which he enjoys in his present course. Still this information will not change his bias or taste. Indeed, for a being to become truly and disinterestedly benevolent, from the mere motive of increasing his own private happiness, would be a contradiction; it would be for him to become benevolent without any benevolent regard to others, or without any benevolence.

It has been said, that whatever is in God, must be in him to an infinite degree, or without limitation; and that goodness is in him is argued from the works of creation and providence, in which he has done good. Therefore goodness is in him to an infinite degree. But this argument may be retorted, thus: whatever is in God, is in him to an infinite degree; and that evil is in God is argued from the works of providence, and from the world around us, in which there is so much evil. Therefore evil is in God to an infinite degree.

In aid of the argument from omniscience, omnipotence is brought in, thus: As God is omniscient, he knows the fitness,

the beauty, the nature, and good tendency of virtue, both to his own happiness and that of his creatures. And as he is omnipotent, he can be under no control or influence, to divert him from what he knows to be best. To this it is answered, no doubt God is above all control or influence from creatures, and from without himself. But the very question is, whether he be not an evil or depraved being, and whether he be not under the influence of his moral depravity, in the same manner that he is under the influence of goodness, if he be a good being. If he be an evil being, his omnipotence will be no security against his choosing or doing evil.

It may be objected, that according to this reasoning God is the subject of disinterested wickedness, which it is said is impossible. To this I answer, it is uncertain what is meant by disinterested wickedness. If the pleasure which the old Romans took in seeing gladiators fight and kill one another, which was their chief entertainment, or the pleasure which is now taken by vast numbers in boxing matches, bull-baitings, dog-fights, and cock-fights, implies disinterested wickedness; then disinterested wickedness is by no means an impossibility; it is a very frequent reality. If that pleasure be not disinterested, then the Deity, if he were as morally depraved as men are in this world, may take a pleasure which is not disinterested, in seeing armies fight and slaughter one another; in seeing houses and their inhabitants burnt; ships and their crews sunk; thousands die with the yellow fever, etc. If the Deity had created the world and governed it, to show vainGloriously his power and skill, this would have been moral evil; but it would not have been *disinterested* moral evil.

Corollary. As infidels cannot, on their principles, prove the goodness or even the justice of God; so they have no foundation to expect happiness in the future state. They have no foundation to believe, that God will treat them benevolently, or even justly; because they have no evidence that he is a benevolent or a just being.

[*Some criticisms by an anonymous writer were made on the views expressed in the preceding article; to which the following reply was made.*]

The author of the piece inserted in this work, vol. i. p. 382, believes, that the moral perfections of God are capable of proof from the light of nature. His arguments are the following:

1. The evils of this life are punishments of sin, and therefore are no ground of objection to the perfect goodness of God.

Ans. Imprisonments, cropping, branding, and execution, are punishments of vice; but they do not demonstrate the perfect goodness of the magistrate, or of the executioner, by whom they are inflicted. Besides, an objector might say, the evils of this life are punishments of virtue, and call on our author for proof to the contrary. Punishments may be inflicted for crimes, and yet not be inflicted with perfect equality and perfect regard to the general good. And how shall we know, from the light of nature, that the punishments, which God inflicts on men in this life, are inflicted equally according to their respective characters; or that those punishments are necessary and subservient to the divine glory and the general good of the universe? It does not yet appear, that either of these can he known without revelation. Our author's argument supposes, that the present is a state of retribution, and of perfectly equal retribution too; for an unequal retribution is neither an argument for the perfect goodness of God nor an answer to the objection arising from the evil in the world. That the present is a state of equal retribution will not be pretended by our author, and is contrary to scripture and universal observation. "All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean." If the present were a state of equal retribution, we should lose the principal, if not the only argument from the light of nature, in favor of a future state; and as sin, in that case, would be fully punished in this life, there could be no punishment of any man in the future world.

Besides, to be able to account for the natural evil in the world is not sufficient to vindicate the divine goodness; we must be able also to account for *moral* evil; for this did not come into the world without the providence, or at least without the knowledge and permission of God. If God exercised any positive influence, in order to the introduction of moral evil, it will be granted on all hands, that in order to vindicate the divine goodness, we must show, that this evil is finally subservient to good. And can this be done by the bare light of nature? Or if we hold, that God was so inactive in this matter as to stand by and *barely permit* moral evil to come into existence, still we shall not be able to vindicate the divine goodness, otherwise than by proving, that sin is subservient to the general good. So long as this is not proved, it does not appear but that God stood by and consented to an event by which the universe was ruined or greatly impaired. Therefore, let our author show, from the light of nature, that sin is subservient to the greatest good of the universe, and he will do something decisive in the case; but to say that God has caused

or permitted sin, that he might punish it, whether in this or a future state, is no more a vindication of the divine goodness, than it would be a vindication of the goodness of a parent to say that he has wounded his son, or permitted him to be wounded, merely that he might heal him again.

Or, if it should be said, that sin was neither caused nor permitted by God, but that it came into the system without his consent, and although he did all he could to keep it out, the question will return, how can this be proved, especially by the light of nature?

2. Another of our author's arguments is, that God has annexed pain to evil actions, and pleasure to virtuous ones. But, does this prove, that God is perfectly and infinitely good? If not, the point remains unsettled. I conceive, that this no more proves the perfect goodness of God than the communication of some good to mankind proves it. Indeed, it is substantially the same argument which we before considered; that was, that God rewards virtue and punishes vice in this life; that is, that God has annexed pain to vice, and pleasure to virtue. Besides, is not pleasure annexed to many vices? Is there no pleasure, enjoyed by the man of pleasure, by the epicure, the wanton and dissipated? Is not revenge sweet?

3. Our author proceeds:—Whatever evils the general laws, by which the moral world is governed, produce, are subservient to the general good. How does it appear to be subservient to the general good, that there is so much sickness, mortification, disappointment, and death in the world? Yet these frequently, if not generally, take place by general laws. Fevers, pestilences, storms, shipwrecks, and consequent disappointments, bankruptcies, poverty and shame, take place by general laws; so does death. But how does it appear, that these general laws themselves are subservient to the general good? Our author seems here, as in many other parts of his piece, to take for granted the very thing in question, which is, that God is perfectly good, and therefore that the laws which he has established, are subservient to good. Was it not in the power of the Deity to place us in a world governed by laws, by which we should be liable to less evil than attends us in this world? If it should be said, that such a state would not be so suitable for us as the present, nor so subservient to the general good, the question would recur, How does this appear by the bare light of nature? Or how does it appear that the general good requires, that we should be just such creatures as we are.

4. "God has made us capable of the highest improvement." How does this, if it were granted, prove the perfect goodness of

God? Still we suffer much misery. But it is not granted; even Sir Isaac Newton never attained to the highest improvement, unless by the *highest* be meant very low improvement, in comparison with what is possible for a creature.

5. "The pains and evils of this life are suited to our state." In the *first* place, this, in many cases, may be questioned. If, by *state*, he meant *world*, we are all in one state; and yet we suffer very different evils. And this is true of those who are in very similar circumstances in the world. In the *second* place, how does it appear, that our state is a suitable state, subservient, in the highest degree to the general good? Our author adds, that "those evils are clearly calculated to promote, on the whole, our own happiness." If this were proved, it would go far toward settling the dispute; but as it stands in the piece under consideration, it is without proof; therefore it is sufficient to answer, "they are" *not* by the light of nature, "clearly calculated to promote, on the whole, our own happiness."

From these premises, our author infers, that "natural evil does not, in the least, obscure the evidence that God is good, derived from the happiness in the world. Can this consequence be fairly drawn from any or all of the foregoing premises? Is the happiness in the world an evidence, that God is good, equal to what it would be, if there were no natural evil in the world, but the happiness were entire and undiminished by misery? Let the candid answer this inquiry.

Lastly, our author argues his point from the scripture, which asserts, that "the earth is full of God's goodness." It is undoubted, that the earth is full of God's goodness in a proper sense; but the question is, in what sense is this true? It will not be pretended, even by our author, that there is nothing but good in the earth, unless it be in this sense, that there is nothing in the earth which will not be finally overruled for good. And how this should be known by the bare light of nature, is as difficult to be shown, as that God is a being of absolute moral perfection. The earth is full of good, intermixed with evil, and which predominates, has long been a matter of dispute. And how from this nearly equal mixture of good and evil, can the perfect goodness of God be inferred? If it could be clearly shown, that the *greatest part* of this mixture is good; how could it be thence concluded, that the author of this mixture is *perfectly good*? It is granted, that the heavens declare the glorious power and skill of the Lord; but do they also declare that he is perfectly good, and that in him is no evil at all? If they do not, our author has not gained his point. Also it is granted, that God has not left himself without witness,

and that he has given mankind rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. But an objector may say, that he has not left himself without witness, and that he has given drought and unfruitful seasons, filling their hearts with hunger and sadness. *Hume* grants, that so far as God has done good, we may argue that God is good; and at the same time contends, that so far as he sends evil, we have the same evidence, that he is evil, and, on the whole, that we are to conclude, that he is of a mixed character. But the most plausible text brought by our author, and which is always brought on the like occasion, is Rom. 1: 19, 20. "That which may be known of God, is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead." These words must be understood with some limitation, or they will prove too much for even our author. The apostle here asserts a matter of fact, not a mere possibility, what was actually seen and known, and not merely what might be seen and known, and of which the evidence might be traced out. Now, will our author pretend, that the absolute moral perfection of God was, in fact, clearly seen by the heathen, by the help of the bare light of nature, without any aid from revelation, whether written or traditional? I believe he will not choose to assert it. But if he will not assert this to be contained in the text last cited, it will not answer his purpose. I may grant, that the moral character of God was manifest to some of the heathen, by the evidence which God has given in the works of creation and providence, *together with revelation*, the knowledge of which was either derived from the Jews, or handed down from primitive times. Thus, in the first place, the invisible things of God might be, by some of them, clearly seen by revelation; and then, by comparing this revelation with the works of creation and providence, those invisible things might be further illustrated, and more thoroughly understood. So that this text, which is commonly brought as decisive in favor of the proof of God's moral perfection, from the light of nature, appears to be easily capable of a very different construction, and therefore decides nothing as to the present question. I beg leave to add, that the text examined in the original, most naturally leads to a sense somewhat different from that just now given. The literal translation is, the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being *minded* or *thought upon* by the things which are made; i. e. by the works of God, those who are considerate among mankind, were even from the time of the creation, led to think of the

invisible things of God; and by the aid of revelation, which by tradition or derivation from the Jews, was in a degree circulating among even the heathen, they clearly saw those invisible things. The participle *νοούμενα* properly signifies *minded, thought of*, or *considered*, and not so properly *understood*. The use of it in the New Testament proves this, when all the instances in which this or the verb *νοέω* occurs, are considered and compared.

It is further to be observed, that the apostle does not say, that in the *invisible things of God*, he meant to include his moral perfection; but he explains himself to mean by invisible things, eternal *power*, and *godhead*, or *supremacy*; and that anything more was included by the apostle in the term *godhead*, remains to be proved.

Our author,* says, "it will be admitted, that when the regard which men have for their own felicity, or the good of their own personal being, does not exceed the quantity, and in that sense, the merit of their existence, it cannot be criminal." This is not admitted, because it implies, that a man whose quantity of existence is equal to 10, and who places all his happiness in drunkenness and debauchery, may lawfully regard this his happiness, according to the quantity of his existence; i. e. with a regard equal to No. 10. Therefore, this man, in regarding his carnal happiness aforesaid, to the degree of 10, is innocent, nay, is virtuous. And if he have a neighbor whose quantity of existence is equal to 5, and who places all his happiness in the emotions and practice of piety and virtue; the man first supposed ought to regard his own happiness in drunkenness and debauchery twice as much as the happiness of his neighbor consisting in benevolence and beneficence; and whenever the happiness of the latter stands in competition with that of the former, he may lawfully and virtuously sacrifice it to his own pleasure, in drunkenness and debauchery. And would not this make it lawful and virtuous for any man to sacrifice to his lust the chastity of any woman of a quantity of being less than his own? On this principle, any man placing his happiness in what he will, has a right to sacrifice to that happiness the happiness of any other man whose quantity of being is less than his own; and provided Nero was possessed of

* Referring to an anonymous writer who endeavored to prove the moral perfections of God from the light of nature, in answer to another correspondent whose signature was N.

a quantity of being superior to that of all Rome, and he took supreme happiness in seeing houses and their inhabitants burning together, he would have done his duty in setting Rome on fire, and fiddling while he contemplated the flames, and feasted on the dying shrieks of men, women, and children.

"The supposition," says our author, "that a sinner should be possessed of infinite being without a change of heart, involves in it an absurdity. The views and interest of a sinner are private and partial; in this consists selfishness. This disunites and separates him from being in general. But that a private and separate interest should become infinite, and yet remain private and separate, it will be readily seen is naturally impossible. That those affections which separate the subject from infinite being should become infinite, and still in their exercises separate the subject from infinite being, is a manifest absurdity. Nothing can be more absurd and inconsistent with itself than the supposition of an infinite private interest—infinite selfishness." On this I remark,

1. The very question, in debate is, whether God, an infinite being, be sinful or holy; and to say, that it is absurd to suppose that this infinite being is a sinner, is to assume the thing in question. Let this be proved and the point is settled.

2. When our author says, "The views and interest of a sinner are private and partial," there is an ambiguity in his words. If he mean, that the views and interests of a finite sinner are detached from the interest of the universe, I grant it; but if we suppose that this finite sinner becomes infinite, and infinitely exceeds all other beings; though the fact is acknowledged to be impossible, yet supposing it to take place, his views and interest, though the temper of his heart remain the same, are no longer detached from the interest or happiness of being in general, as he is now become as it were the whole, and his interest is, of course, the interest of being in general. Or if we apply the expression last quoted to the Deity, and say, that his views and interest, supposing him to be sinful, are private and partial, still this needs explanation. If it mean that the views of the Deity are without benevolence to other beings, I grant it; his views and aims terminate in those objects which are merely personal, not implying any good will to others. In this their sinfulness consists. But if it mean, that the views and interest of the Deity are not the views and interest of being in general, I grant that they are; because, as he is an infinite being, he is being in general. Still his views and aims are the very same *in kind* with those of every sinner; all the difference is merely relative, as he stands in

the relation of a head to the universe, and is infinitely the greatest being, which they are not. The ambiguity of the expression, then, is this; it may mean, either, that the views and aims of the Deity are without benevolence to other beings, which is granted, and in which there is no absurdity, supposing him to be an evil being; or, that his views and aims are not the views and aims of being in general, which is not pretended.

3. Our author says, "this" i. e. the circumstance that his views and interests are private and partial, "disunites and separates him from being in general." I deny that the same love of honor, of ease, and of private personal good, which are natural to mankind, if they existed in the Deity, would disunite and separate him from being in general. Because, as he is being in general, however selfish he be, he is united to himself, and therefore united to being in general; unless by union to being in general be meant something more than the Deity's bare love of himself, and of his own happiness, in whatever that happiness consist. But nothing more than this is granted; and to suppose any more is to beg the question.

4. Our author proceeds: "But that a private and separate interest should become infinite, and yet remain private and separate, it is seen is naturally impossible." I grant, that nothing finite can *become* infinite. But the question is, whether the interest of an infinite being may not be selfish, and, in that sense, private and separate from the interest of all other beings; not whether it may be separate from the interest of being in general, including the infinite being; because the infinite being infinitely exceeds all others taken together, and he himself is being in general. What does our author mean by private and separate interest? If he mean an interest separate from that in which being in general in fact does place its happiness, I grant that it is naturally impossible that the Deity should have a private and separate interest. But if he mean an interest which is separate from that in which being in general ought to place its happiness, which includes no benevolence to others, which does not comprehend the interest of others, but is opposed to it, as it is perfect selfishness; to say that it is impossible that the Deity should have such an interest as this, is to beg the question.

5. It is supposed by our author, that true virtue consists in *a regard to the happiness or interest of being in general.* But this is as ambiguous as any phrase on which I have remarked. If that definition mean *benevolence*, and a regard to the happiness of others, so far as that happiness is consistent with benevolence; I allow it to be a true definition. But if being in general

place its happiness in excessive animal gratifications, in pomp and vain glory, in love of personal ease and enjoyment, without benevolence, or in tormenting others; to regard or wish well to such happiness of being in general, is no virtue; it is vice; it is to wish well to wickedness; nor is it true benevolence. True benevolence is to wish the best, purest, and highest kind of happiness to being in general. But the happiness above described, is very far from the best, purest, and highest kind. Therefore, to wish well to such happiness, is to oppose true and real benevolence.

6. Our author proceeds: "That those affections which separate the subject from infinite being; should become infinite, and still, in their exercises, separate the subject from infinite being, is a manifest absurdity." But is there any absurdity in the supposition, that the infinite Creator of all should be the subject of infinitely strong love to himself, and his own private happiness, without any benevolence to his creatures; and thus, that this self-love should separate him from his creatures? I pretend not that this self-love would separate the Creator from himself, and so from infinite being, unless it be in this sense, that it would separate him from that happiness which, if he had a relish for it, would afford him a far greater, more pure, and rational enjoyment than that of which, in this argument, he is supposed to be the subject. If it be observed that the Deity should be the subject of an infinitely strong affection, which in this sense separates him from himself, or from that which ought to be his interest, and is his true interest, let it be pointed out.

7. "Nothing can be more absurd and inconsistent with itself, than the supposition of an infinite private interest—infinite selfishness." There is here still the same ambiguity in the word *private*. If infinite *private* interest mean an interest separate from that of the Deity, and so of being in general, I grant that there can be no infinite private interest. But if it mean an interest separate from the interest of others, i. e. creatures; to suppose that the Deity cannot have such an interest, is to take for granted the very thing in dispute. Also to suppose, that the Deity is not the subject of an infinitely strong attachment to his own private personal happiness, without benevolence to his creatures, which is selfishness, is in like manner to take for granted the thing in dispute.

"If the Divine existence is so unlimited that the supposition of an addition to the quantity of existence in the universe is inadmissible, God's benevolent regards to his own infinite being must, of course, imply benevolence to being in general, compre-

hending the created system." This is a very important proposition, the very proposition in dispute; but where is the proof? If this be proved, the dispute is settled. The author seems to suppose, that if it be granted that the divine infinity is such, that the quantity of existence is incapable of increase; it follows, of course, that God's benevolence to himself, is benevolence to the created system. Though infinite existence, in a certain sense, cannot be increased, yet God and his creatures are not one and the same. Therefore, benevolence to one does not imply benevolence to the other. For God, to have benevolence to himself, is to wish happiness to himself. But this does not imply, that he wishes happiness to his creatures—So that the main point is yet to be proved.

The Theological Magazine, vol. iii. p. 28, contains remarks on a piece which I had before published in the same work. In this piece the object is, to prove, by the light of nature, that God is a being of moral perfection. To this end, our author observes, "that the suffering of merited evil, acknowledged to be such by impartial reason, does not obscure or lesson the evidence we have of the goodness of God arising from the positive good we enjoy." On this I remark, it is not acknowledged to be evident by the bare light of nature, that all the evils in the world are merited. How does it appear by that light, that children and infants merit all they suffer in life and death? How, that the brutal creation merits all its sufferings? Not to insist on the case of those, "of whom the world was not worthy, who were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, and wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented."

Or supposing it were evident, that the evils in the world were merited by the subjects of them; how is it evident, by the light of nature, that the general good requires and is promoted by all those evils? Let them be ever so justly deserved, it does not thence follow, that the general good and divine glory, require that they be inflicted, especially in case of repentance and reformation. As on the principles of christianity, though every saint deserves endless punishment, yet the general good and the divine glory do not require nor admit that he suffer it. I think that our author himself will not say, that it is evident, by the bare light of nature, that the general good requires, that in this world, "all things should come alike to all." And if it be not evident, that

all the evils in the world are reconcilable with the general good, it is not evident, that they are reconcilable with perfect goodness in God, as perfect goodness in him will do that only which is subservient to the general good.

I have to observe further; supposing it were evident, that all the evils in the world are merited by those who suffer them; how does the light of nature teach that the governor of the world inflicts those evils on account of the demerit of the subjects? What proof does that light afford, that those evils, at least some of them, are not inflicted as a punishment of the good deeds of those who suffer them? To this our author answers, "the proof is consciousness, that we merit them for our faults."

I reply, suppose we are conscious of our own faults, is this a proof that the governor of the world punishes us for our demerit? We may be conscious of our own demerit or faults, but we cannot be conscious of the motives of his conduct in the infliction of evil. The argument stands thus; we have faults, we are conscious of them; therefore, all the evils we suffer, are punishments inflicted upon us by the Deity, from the motives of abhorrence of those faults, and a design to prevent them in future. Whether this reasoning be conclusive to one, who doubts concerning the moral perfections of God, the reader will determine.

I may add, that our *consciousness* that we have faults, is our mere *opinion* that we have faults; that some of our actions are faulty. Of the *actions* we are or may be conscious, and this consciousness may imply as great a certainty as we have of our own existence. But of the *faultiness* of our actions, we are no more conscious than we are of the faultiness of the same actions performed by another person. Consciousness of *fault* is a very different thing from the consciousness of our own *acts* or *exercises*. The latter carries absolute and intuitive certainty with it. The former is extremely variable, depending on our education, association of ideas, the country, age, nation, and state of society in which we live. It is the mere dictate of our conscience, which is true or false, as it is well or ill informed. *Saul* was not conscious of any fault in persecuting the church. An Indian is not conscious of any in torturing his captive. Therefore, this kind of consciousness is a poor touch-stone of right and wrong, and a still poorer proof of the moral perfection of God.

Our author says, "the argument," which he had urged in his first piece, "did not require positive evidence of the goodness of God from the infliction of merited evil itself; it was satisfied in showing that such infliction was not inconsistent with his goodness." But the infliction of evil is inconsistent with his good-

ness, unless it be inflicted in subserviency to good, and with a design to promote it; and that although the evil be merited by those on whom it is inflicted. And how does the light of nature show this? Until it shall show this, it will by no means answer the objection to divine goodness, arising from the evil in the world. Our author in his first piece, grants, that "if the misery inflicted on creatures is needless, there is as much evidence that God is evil, as there is that he is good." Now, misery is needless or worse than needless, unless it be subservient to good. Unless, therefore, the light of nature show that the misery of creatures is subservient to good, it does not show but that "there is as much evidence that God is evil, as that he is good." Our author, in both his pieces, especially in the first, supposes, that if the misery in the world be *just*, it is *needful* too. If he mean needful to the *general good*, it is not allowed that this follows from the justice of it, as I have above endeavored to illustrate. The damnation of Paul would be just, yet not needful to the general good, but totally inconsistent with it. So that if our author shall be able to show, "that what men suffer is just," it will not follow but "that it is inconsistent with the goodness of God."

Or if our author meant to use the words *justice, merit and demerit*, in the large sense, comprehending the requirement of the general good; then, to say that the evils of life are *just*, and are *merited* by those who suffer them, is the same as to say, that the general good requires them, or that they are subservient to the general good; and to argue, that they are subservient to the general good, because they are merited, is the same as to argue, that they are subservient to the general good, because they are subservient to the general good. And it is just as difficult to prove, that in this sense, the evils of life are merited by the subjects, as to prove, that they are consistent with the general good, or with perfect goodness in God.

Our author proceeds, "The question is, whether *we* have not evidence from the light of nature, that God is good—As we enjoy much good from the hand of God, and suffer no evil but what we deserve, it is evident, *to us* at least, that God is good, whatever it may be to other beings. Whether our consciousness of demerit be *arbitrary*, or *agreeable to the truth and reality of things*, will make no difference as to the evidence *to us*." As I have already observed, consciousness of demerit, or of right or wrong in any part of our conduct, is a mere *opinion*, that we have done right or wrong; which opinion is commonly followed with a sense of shame or self-approbation. Now, this consciousness may be either erroneous and "arbitrary, or agreeable to the

truth and reality of things." It was erroneous in *Saul*, when he was conscious that he did right in persecuting the church. It was erroneous in *Cato* and *Brutus*, when they were conscious that they did right in killing themselves. And this opinion, which our author acknowledges may be either "arbitrary or agreeable to the truth and reality of things," is, by concession, all the ground in this argument, of evidence to us, that God is good; and surely the evidence arising from this ground, is no proof at all. True, we are, or *may be*, conscious, that we deserve all the evil we suffer. So we are, or *may be*, conscious, that we deserve all the good we receive from God, and many have been conscious of it, i. e. have been fully of the opinion, that they deserved it, and more too, even eternal salvation, insomuch that it would not be consistent, in their opinion with justice in God, to exclude them from salvation. Therefore, to such persons, conscious that they deserve all the good, which they receive from God, and yet suffering much evil from his hand, the evidence that God is evil, is just as great as the evidence to any of us, for which our author, in this argument, pleads, that he is good. This evidence, I acknowledge, exists, and is common among men; and if our author imagine, that I deny this evidence, he greatly misunderstands me. The evidence which I deny, is evidence not founded on the *opinions* of men, "whether arbitrary or agreeable to the truth and reality of things," but founded on the very truth and reality of things.

To this our author is driven by the objection arising from the permission of sin. The objection is, that as God has permitted sin, and the light of nature does not show, that it is subservient to the general good; therefore, from the light of nature we cannot vindicate the divine goodness, or prove that God is perfectly good. The answer of our author is, that we have no need to comprehend the ultimate issue of moral evil, before we can satisfy *ourselves* concerning the perfect goodness of God; but as we *think*, whether *arbitrarily* or *truly*, that we deserve all the evil we suffer; therefore *we* have evidence, that God is perfectly good. My reply is,

1. That though we do *think*, that we deserve all the evil we suffer; this opinion, if "*arbitrary*," and not "agreeable to truth," is no proof that we do deserve it.

2. That if it were ever so evidently "agreeable to truth," that we deserve all the evil we suffer, this would be no evidence, that God inflicts that evil on us on account of our demerit.

3. If it were ever so evidently "agreeable to truth," that God does inflict all the *natural* evils of life on us, on account of our

demerit; this would not make it evident, that the general good requires that we suffer those evils; or that God inflicts them, with an ultimate view to promote good.

4. If it were ever so evident, that since sin exists in the world, the general good requires, that it be punished with all the *natural* evils of life; this would be no proof, that sin itself is subservient to the general good; and that God permitted it from this motive. So that our author, in order to maintain his argument, must prove, from the light of nature,

1. That it is an opinion not "*arbitrary*," but "*agreeable* to the truth and reality of things," that we deserve all the natural evils of life.

2. That God inflicts those evils, not on account of our good conduct, but on account of our demerit.

3. That the general good is subserved by our suffering those evils; and that God inflicts them with a design to promote the general good.

4. That the existence of sin in the world, is subservient to the general good; and that God permitted it from this motive.

Our author thinks the circumstance, "that God has annexed pain to vicious, and pleasure to virtuous actions, proves that God is good, if there be nothing to rebut the evidence—and as the light of nature is sufficient to show, that all the attributes of the Deity are infinite, of course it follows, that he is infinitely good." On this I observe,

1. That the pleasure implied in many virtuous actions and emotions, is necessarily connected with those actions and emotions, and so far as appears, could not have been separated from them, but would have been the same on the atheistic hypothesis. For example, there is a pleasure in benevolence, in complacency in virtue, in a virtuous character, in the perfect moral law, in gratitude, in confidence in a faithful friend, in doing what we are conscious is our duty, as justice, beneficence, etc. Therefore, if this pleasure be not annexed to virtue, by the constitution of God, but would be the same if there were no God, and we existed in a social state, it is no proof of the divine goodness.

2. There are many pains attendant on virtue; as on benevolence to the distressed and dying, whom we cannot relieve; on repentance, always attended with remorse at least in this world; on self-denial, confessing our faults one to another, admonishing and reproving one another; on that constant watchfulness, which, in the present state, is necessary to be maintained against sin and temptation, etc. If, therefore, the pleasure attendant on virtue, be an evidence of the goodness of God, I ask whether that evi-

dence be not at all "rebutted" by the *pain* attendant on virtue; and whether, if the pleasure attendant on virtue prove God to be good, the pain attendant on it do not prove him to be evil.

3. There is pleasure "in fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;" in pride; in pursuing and acquiring the objects of ambition and worldliness. Did not Nebuchadnezzar feel pleasure, when he said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" Did not Belshazzar feel pleasure, when he, his princes, his wives and concubines, triumphantly drank wine out of the golden vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem? Did not the old Roman conquerors enjoy pleasure, when they entered the city in triumph, leading in chains and in the most contemptuous and insulting manner, the generals and kings whom they had conquered? I need not proceed. A volume might be filled with instances, in which the depraved heart of man is gratified by sin and vice.

But says our author, "It may be reasonably doubted, whether pleasure is, in any case, annexed to vice as such. The epicure enjoys the pleasure of eating and drinking in common with the temperate—but the pleasures of the vicious are not equally genuine and sincere with those of the virtuous, and are generally attended with pain from remorse—the sweetness of revenge—is the sweetness of resting from torment."

What our author means by "pleasure annexed to vice *as such*," is not certain. Does he mean, that when pride is gratified, it is not gratified *as pride*, but *as humility*? That when malice and avarice are gratified, they are gratified not as they are, malice and avarice, but as they are benevolence, and "contentment with such things as we have?" So with regard to ambition, inordinate self-love, etc. If he mean, that the pleasure attached to the gratification of pride, malice, etc. is not a vicious, but a virtuous emotion, this is denied, and must be clearly proved, before it can be admitted. Our author admits that "the epicure enjoys the pleasure of eating and drinking," in his epicurean manner, "in common with the temperate." This is the very objection which had been urged against our author's principle, and proves, that so far at least *all things come alike to all*; and that the author of nature has so far borne no testimony in favor of temperance. If what our author means by "pleasure annexed to vice *as such*," be, that the man of vice, for instance, the epicure, does not alone enjoy pleasure in his intemperate course; but the man of virtue enjoys the same pleasure in his temperance; then his observation may be retorted; thus, pleasure is not annexed to virtue *as such*,

but is common to the temperate and the epicure. So that this argument is just as forcible against our author's principle as in favor of it.

"But," says our author, "the pleasures of the vicious are not equally genuine and sincere with those of the virtuous." This is shifting the ground of argument, and granting that there are *some* pleasures annexed to vice; but not so great as those annexed to virtue; and the argument stands thus, God has annexed more pleasure to virtue, than he has to vice; therefore, he is a perfect friend to virtue, and perfect enemy to vice. The argument is much the same with that which is commonly used by authors, to prove, from the light of nature, the moral perfection of God, viz. that there is more happiness in the world than there is misery; therefore God is perfectly good. This argument, in any other case, would not be admitted to have the least weight; as in this case, a father does good to his children more frequently, or to a greater degree, than he teazes and torments them; therefore he is a perfectly good parent.

"The pleasures of the vicious are attended with pain from remorse." So the pleasures of the virtuous are attended with pain from disappointment, from not being able to accomplish their benevolent wishes, and from various other causes. And as to *remorse*, it proceeds from *the opinion* which a man entertains of the viciousness of his own conduct or temper; and would, for aught appears, be the same on the atheistic hypothesis.

"The sweetness of revenge," says our author, "is the sweetness of resting from torment." The same may be said of the gratification of most or all our strong desires, as compassion to the distressed, the natural affection of parents to their children, etc. And what follows? Surely not that there is no pleasure in the gratification of those desires; nor that all the pleasure is a mere resting from torment. And this is as true of revenge as of any of them.

4. That "the light of nature is sufficient to show, that all attributes of the Deity are infinite," supposing goodness is one of them, is not granted. Suppose it could be proved by the light of nature, that goodness in a greater or less degree, does exist in the Deity; how does it follow, that this goodness is perfect and infinite? I am sensible that this has been frequently taken for granted, but without warrant. We, therefore, wait for proof. If it be said, that if God be partly good and partly evil, he must be changeable; this does not follow. He will indeed, on this hypothesis, sometimes do good and sometimes evil. But the good which he does he may have unchangeably determined to do; and

so with regard to the evil. He sometimes sends fair weather, and sometimes foul; but is he therefore changeable? If it should be further said, that if God be partly good and partly evil, there would be a struggle between the opposite principles of good and evil, till one should become superior, and then this would overcome and eradicate the other: I answer, 1. There is no necessity of supposing that either principal would become superior. They might be balanced. 2. If one were superior, it would not follow that it would eradicate the other. Doubtless of the opposite principles of sin and holiness, one has been superior in many men; yet it has not therefore, eradicated the opposite. And that it would produce such an effect in the Deity, in the case now supposed, we have a right to demand evidence.

5. This whole argument, on which I have been remarking, may be retorted. The argument is this: "that God has annexed pain to vicious, and pleasure to virtuous actions, proves that God is good, if there be nothing to rebut the evidence—and as the light of nature is sufficient to show, that all attributes of the Deity are infinite, of course it follows, that he is infinitely good." It may be retorted thus: that God has annexed pain to virtuous, and pleasure to vicious actions, proves that God is evil, if there is nothing to rebut the evidence—and as the light of nature is sufficient to show that all attributes of the Deity are infinite, of course it follows, that he is infinitely evil.

Our author, in this, as well as in his first piece, argues the goodness of God from the goodness of the laws of nature; those laws by which the natural world is governed. If he mean that some of those laws are good, as that by which light is produced; it does not prove the point in dispute. That some of the laws of the natural world are good, no more proves, that God is perfectly good, than the same thing is proved by God's sometimes doing good. An objector may say, be it so, that God sometimes does good, and has established some good laws; if he sometimes do evil and have established some laws which are evil, we are left at a loss concerning his character, and may as well argue from the evil which he does, and from the evil laws which he has established, that his character is evil, as from the good which he does, and from the good laws that he has established, that his character is good. Nor is there any way, I conceive, to answer this objection, but by showing that he always does good only, and that *all* his laws are good. If, therefore, in this argument, our author mean that all the laws of nature are entirely good; if this were evident of itself, or were proved, it would go far toward the establishment of the point in question. But it is not allowed to be self-evident,

nor does our author pretend that he has proved it; but seems to allow, that "he has taken it for granted as a medium of proof," that God is good. However, as it is not granted, but is equally disputed, as that God is good; to take it for granted, is as improper, as to take for granted, that God is good. Indeed, it amounts to the same thing. The laws of nature are the laws of providence, the laws by which God governs the world. And if those laws be good, all that God does in the course of common providence is good. If this be granted, no doubt it will be granted that God is good. Therefore, taking for granted what our author calls his medium of proof, is the same as to take for granted the very thing to be proved thereby.

Our author asserts, that "our circumstances" in this world, "are suited to our character and state." If it were proved, that our circumstances are so suited to our character and state, as to subserve the good of the general system, it would doubtless be a main step toward the establishment of the goodness of God. But without proof, this cannot be admitted; and it requires the same proof as the divine goodness does.

I come at length to the argument from Rom. 1: 18—21, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." In my former piece, I supposed it plain, from the form of expression, "The invisible things *are clearly seen*," that the apostle is declaring a matter of fact, that those invisible things were actually seen, and not merely that they were so far exhibited, that the knowledge of them might be traced out. This I think is further evident by several expressions of the context; as, "who *hold the truth* in unrighteousness;" "that which may be known of God, *is manifest in them*, for God *hath showed* it unto them;" "when they *knew* God." Verse 28, "As they did not like to *retain* God in their knowledge." Verse 32, "Who *knowing* the judgment of God." How our author will reconcile these forms of expression with his construction, it is difficult to conceive. According to that construction, they must mean merely, "Are *capable of* being clearly seen;" "who *may possibly* hold the truth in unrighteousness;" "That which may be known of God, *may be* manifest in them; for God hath so far showed it to

them, that it *may be* known by them; (which is a mere identical proposition.) "When they were *capable* of knowing God, they glorified him not as God;" "As they did not like to retain God in their *possible* knowledge;" "Who *having a capacity* of knowing the judgment of God."

However, supposing it were made plain, that the apostle meant no more than that the heathen, by careful attention and study, might trace out the knowledge of God's eternal power and Godhead; still two questions material to this discussion, remain to be answered. The first is, what are we to understand by eternal *power* and *Godhead?* The second is, supposing it to be made out, that eternal power and Godhead comprehended the divine moral perfections, *by what means* were the heathen capable of attaining to the knowledge of them? By the bare light of nature? Or by that with the aid of Revelation?

The first question is, What are we to understand by eternal power and Godhead? Our author contends, that they must include moral perfection, or the heathen were not under obligation to glorify God as God, or to be thankful. But if they, by the light of nature, discovered, that God alone was a being of eternal power, and absolute supremacy, were they not under obligation to acknowledge, in the most explicit and public manner, this truth, and to treat God accordingly? of course, to renounce the worship of all those Gods, to whose worship they had hitherto devoted themselves, and thenceforward, to worship the Lord alone? And if they were ignorant of the moral perfection of God, they would surely have had, at least as good reason to impute moral perfections to him, as to any of those Gods whom they did worship. If they had so acted, they would no longer have "changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things;" but would, in some measure, at least have "glorified God as God," and would have been "thankful" for all the good which they received from God; and that whether they were settled in their belief of his absolute moral perfection or not. Do we not all feel our obligation to be thankful for benefits received from men, not only concerning whom we doubt whether they possess moral perfection, but whom we know to be destitute of it?

Our author tells us, "The original Greek word, translated Godhead, seems to express all that belongs to the divine nature." It may seem so to some, but we wish for proof. He adds, "It is certainly used in this extensive sense, in Col. 2: 9." It is to be presumed he did not consult "the original Greek," or he would have seen, that the same word is not used in Col. 2: 9. If *Wil-*

Hams' Concordance may be depended on, Rom. 1: 20, is the only place in the New Testament, in which it occurs. By *Trommius'* Concordance, it appears not to be used at all in the Septuagint; but it occurs once in the Apocrypha, in Wisd. 18: 9, "The righteous children of good men—made a holy law," *τῆς θειότητος νόμον, a law of the Godhead.* Whether in this passage it include moral perfection no more appears, than from Rom. 1: 20. It may mean a holy law, or a law of supreme authority, as all the laws of God are.

Our author supposes the word *power*, in this text, summarily expresses the natural perfections of God; and that therefore, *Godhead* "is intended to include his moral perfections; otherwise the sense is not at all advanced by it." There is no apparent evidence, that the word *power* was intended to express all the natural perfections of God. Knowledge or omniscience, is a distinct perfection from *power*, and not necessarily expressed by that word. Nay, the word *power*, as used here, does not necessarily imply *omnipotence.* Therefore, if *Godhead* be understood to mean the divine independence, supremacy, omniscience and sovereignty, the sense is advanced by it. But if the words *eternal power* and *Godhead*, were entirely synonymous, it would be a poor ground for the argument, which our author attempts to build upon it. Instances of synonymous words frequently occur in most books, and especially in the scriptures.

The second question mentioned above, is, supposing it certain, that eternal power and Godhead do comprehend the moral perfections; by what means were the heathen capable of attaining to the knowledge of them? By the bare light of nature? Or by that with the aid of revelation, either handed down from primitive times, or derived from the Jews, or both? That they were capable of attaining to that knowledge in the latter way, I allow, and suppose that Rom. 1: 20, may be fairly understood in this sense. Our author supposes it cannot be fairly understood in this sense, and argues from that expression, "being understood by the things that are made." My answer to this is, 1. That *νοούμενα*, translated *understood*, does not necessarily or properly mean, that, but *minded, thought of*, or *considered.* 2. That if it can be proved, that *νοούμενα*, in this text, means *understood*, still the text may mean, not that the eternal power and Godhead are found out, and in that sense understood by the things that are made; but that being made known by revelation, they are further illustrated, and better understood, by a contemplation of the works of creation and providence, and by comparing the light of nature with the light of revelation.

1. The meaning of *νοούμενα* is the object of inquiry. All the instances, in which the verb *νοέω*, in any of its forms, occurs in the New Testament, are the following: Matt. 15: 17, "Do ye not yet *understand*, that whatsoever entereth into the mouth, goeth into the belly?" etc. It is manifest, that here it may be rendered, *consider, attend to, reflect.* It is rendered by Montanus, *consideratis, consider.* Matt. 16: 9, "Do ye not yet *understand* neither remember the five loaves?" etc. and, v. 11, "How is it, that ye do not *understand*, that I spake it not to you concerning bread?" In both these texts, Beza renders it by *animadvertitis, consider.* Matt. 24: 15, "Whoso readeth, let him *understand*;" rendered by Beza, *animadvertat, let him attend;* by Tremellius, *consideret, let him consider.* Mark 7: 18, "Do ye not *perceive?*" rendered by Montanus, *consideratis, consider.* Chap. 8: 17, "*Perceive* ye not yet?" rendered by Beza, *animum advertitis, reflect* or *consider.* Chap. 13: 14, "Let him that readeth *understand*;" rendered by Beza, *animadvertat, consider;* the same by Tremellius. Indeed, it must be so explained, however it is rendered. For *understanding*, in the strict sense, is not a voluntary act, and therefore, not proper matter of command or exhortation. John 12: 40, "Nor *understand* with their heart." This is the first instance, in which the forementioned noted translators of the New Testament, Beza, Tremellius, and Montanus, agree in rendering the word in question, *intelligant, understand.* The next passage in which *νοέω* occurs, is Rom. 1: 20, the text now under consideration. Although in his translation, Beza renders *νοούμενα intellecta, understood;* yet Pool, in his synopsis, says, that he explains it by *animadversa, observed*, referring doubtless to Beza's other works, which I do not possess. According to Pool, Flaccius Illyricus, and Castalio, render it *dum considerantur*, while the things that are made, are considered. Eph. 3: 4, "Ye may *understand* my knowledge." According to Pool, Beza here explains the word by *perpendere, consider*, or *ponder;* and Castalio, *animadvertere, consider.* In the same chapter, v. 20, "Now to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or *think*." Our author is of the opinion, that *νοούμενα* here might have been as well rendered *understand.* But surely he did not consider, that the apostle is here representing the omnipotence of God; and as we understand but very few things, and most of all those few, in a very imperfect degree; to say that God is able to do above all that we understand, is an ascription of no great power or glory. But to be able to do above all that we are able to *think* or *imagine*, is doubtless peculiar to the divine omnipotence. Besides,

we can ask for many things which we do not *understand*. Therefore, to say that God can do above what we can *ask* or *understand*, is a down-hill climax, not to be ascribed to the apostle Paul. Doubtless, our translators have, in this instance, rendered the word properly. Beza, in this place, renders it *mente concipimus, imagine*. Tremellius renders it *cogitamus, think*. Montanus translates it into the same words with Beza. 1 Tim. 1: 7, "Desiring to be teachers of the law, *understanding* neither what they say, or whereof they affirm." I have no objection to the translation in this instance. Yet there is no necessity of this translation. It does not appear, but that the sense of the apostle was, *considering* neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. They were such loose, negligent teachers, that they not only did not *understand*, but did not *study* or *consider* their subject. They resembled many teachers of the present day. 2 Tim. 2: 7, "*Consider* what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." Here it is translated *consider*, the very word by which I propose to have it translated in Rom. 1: 20. By Beza, and Tremellius, it is rendered *considera, consider*. According to Pool, Grotius renders it *attende, attend to*. Erasmus, Flaccius Illyricus, and the Tigurine version render it *cogita, think of*. Scultetus expresses it by *perpende, ponder*. Heb. 11: 3, "Through faith we *understand* that the worlds were framed by the word of God." I have no objection to our author's availing himself of this text to prove, that *sometimes* νοέω signifies to understand. Thus I have examined every passage in the New Testament, in which that verb in any form is used; and I appeal to the reader, whether it do necessarily or most commonly signify to *understand*. Not νοέω, but συνίημι is the Greek word properly correspondent to the English *understand*.

I have been thus particular in my attention to the meaning of a word, because it is so important to our author's system, and because he "thinks it clear, that in the passage in question, it is translated in the most usual and proper sense." If the most usual and proper sense of it were *understand*; still in Rom 1: 20, it might be used in a sense less usual and proper. So that that text would not even on the hypothesis now made, be decisive of the main question now in discussion. But since, by far the greater part of the texts in which the word is used, are manifestly capable of a sense different from that insisted on by our author, and are actually understood in a different sense, by some of the most noted translators and critics of the New Testament, and greatest adepts in the Greek language; may I not fairly conclude, that Rom. 1: 20 decides nothing concerning the proof of the moral perfections

of God, from the bare light of nature. Especially when it is considered,

2. That if it can be proved, that *νοούμενα* in Rom. 1: 20, means *understood;* still the text may mean not that the *eternal power* and Godhead are found out, and in that sense understood by the things that are made; but that they being made known by revelation, are further illustrated and more fully understood by comparing the light of revelation with the works of creation and providence. When once God's natural and moral perfections are revealed, the works of creation and providence will happily give more enlarged and striking views of those perfections, than might arise from mere revelation, especially from the imperfect revelation, which the heathen world could derive, either from their progenitors or from the Jews. So that if our author can establish his criticism on *νοούμενα*, he would not gain the main question. In order to this he must prove, that "being understood by the things that are made," means, that the eternal power and Godhead, now supposed to include the moral perfections, can be *found out*, as well as more thoroughly understood by the things that are made.

If the ancient heathen were, by the bare light of nature, capable of finding out and proving the moral perfections of God, doubtless, discerning and good men, such as our author is acknowledged to be, are now capable of proving them from the same source of information. If, therefore, he or any other man will from this source, trace out satisfactory evidence of those perfections, and exhibit it to the world, the candid will doubtless receive it; and the need of further disputation concerning the meaning of Rom. 1: 20, will be precluded. But if neither our author nor any other man can from the light of nature, point out any tolerable proof of the moral perfections of God, I submit it to the reader, whether this be not a ground of strong presumption, that our author has mistaken the sense of Rom. 1: 20, especially since it is fairly and easily capable of a very different construction.

I hope, that when our author shall write again, he will not represent me to be inconsistent with myself, merely because, upon different suppositions, I have given different constructions of Rom. 1: 20. Though some of those suppositions do mutually exclude each other, and are incapable of coexistence; yet it is conceived, that there is no inconsistence in any of them taken separately; and each one is supposed to exist no otherwise than separately.

IMMATERIALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL.

The soul is an immaterial substance, and therefore naturally immortal, i. e. not capable of destruction, by a dissolution of parts, as bodies are.

I acknowledge that this consideration is not decisive in favor of the immortality of the soul; yet all opposers of the immortality, oppose also the immateriality of it; and thus show, that they consider the immateriality of it as an obstacle in their way, which it concerns them to remove.

As they assert the soul to be a material substance, it seems proper to consider—their ideas of matter, and of the soul—and their arguments to disprove its immateriality.

1. I shall briefly consider their ideas of matter, and of the soul.

It is not strange, that on these subjects they should differ among themselves; and it is not worth while to follow, or even relate the opinions of all the opposers of the immateriality of the soul. It will be sufficient, if I consider that opinion, which, in modern time, is most noted, and perhaps has been most labored and supported by the most learned arguments.

Matter is observed to be "an extended substance, possessed of certain powers of attraction and repulsion;"* and it is said, "take away attraction and repulsion, and matter vanishes."† Solidity or impenetrability is denied to belong to matter, which is further defined to be "a compasses of centres of attraction and repulsion." If then matter think, reflect, reason, etc. and if, as it is said, it consist of mere centres of attraction and repulsion, then those centres, void of all solidity, must think, reason, etc.

Matter, as just now observed, is said to be an *extended* substance; and a compact body is defined to be a compasses of centres of attraction and repulsion. At the same time it is asserted, that a single one of those centres is indivisible, and does not occupy any portion of space.‡ If so, then any number of those centres, or any compasses of them, can occupy no space.

It is said that matter possesses certain powers of attraction and repulsion. Now, what possesses these powers? Nothing solid, nothing extended; but an unextended centre, or mathematical point; or at the most a compasses of such points. These points are the mere centres to, and from which the divine agency is directed in what this scheme calls attraction and repulsion; for it

* Correspondence between Price and Priestly, p. 16.
† Ibid. p. 245. ‡ Ibid. p. 249.

is allowed, that attraction and repulsion are no actions of matter, but of some cause extrinsic to matter, i. e. of the Deity. It is expressly holden, "that the divine being, and his energy, are absolutely necessary to that of every other being;" that "every thing is the divine power," (I suppose the meaning is the *effect* of the divine power) and "all action is the [effect of the] action of God;" that "he does everything;"* that "his power is the very life and soul of everything that exists; and that, strictly speaking, without him, we *are*, as well as *can do*, *nothing*." The whole of matter, therefore, according to this scheme, is the divine agency, drawing or driving certain mathematical points, to or from certain other mathematical points.

Now, if this matter think and reason, love and hate, what is it belonging to it, that thinks, reasons, etc.? It must be either these mathematical points, or the divine agency exerted in attraction and repulsion. But it is to be presumed, that mere mathematical points do not think, reason, etc. because, on that supposition, not only would all matter think, which is not pretended, but all space, and every mathematical point in the universe would think.

Nor will it be pretended, that the divine agency, exerted in attraction and repulsion, thinks, or is the subject of thought. No doubt the divine mind thinks in all its actions. But even the advocates for materialism do not hold, that the divine mind is matter, or any property of matter; and we are inquiring after that thought, of which matter is the subject, or which is put forth by matter. If the divine agency, which produces attraction and repulsion, produce thought also, then, as attraction and repulsion are common to all matter, it will follow, that *thought* is common to all matter. But this is expressly denied by those whom I am now opposing.

The doctrine which I am considering is, that matter thinks; yet it is denied, that matter of itself either attracts or repels, i. e. it is denied that matter moves either itself or any other matter. But is it not strange, that matter has no power of either attraction or repulsion, and that all motion in all matter should be the effect of an immediate divine agency, and yet that it should have the power, without immediate divine agency, to think and reason, to choose and refuse, to love and hate? Surely, if "everything be the divine power," or the immediate effect of it; if "all action, be God's action, or the immediate effect of it;" if "the Deity do," or immediately cause everything; if his "power be the very *life* and *soul* of everything that exists, and, strictly

* Correspondence between Price and Priestly, p. 253.

speaking, without him, we are, and can do, nothing; then thought, according to these concessions, is the immediate effect of God's action; it is an act of the mind, and therefore it is the immediate effect of God's action; and as God's power is the life and soul of everything that exists, our soul is not matter, but the divine power; or, at least, the divine power is the soul of our soul; and, strictly speaking, without him and his immediate agency we cannot think.

If it should be said, that we can think without his *immediate* agency, and only his *mediate* agency is necessary to our thinking, I ask, what is the medium which the divine agency makes use of to the production of thought? Not anything in or belonging to matter surely; for that, according to the scheme now under consideration, consists of nothing but attraction and repulsion, directed to and from certain indivisible centres, or mathematical points. It will not be pretended that these points are the medium, for they are really nothing but the beginnings and bounds of the divine agency, in attraction and repulsion. It will not be pretended that attraction or repulsion is the medium; for they are nothing but the immediate divine agency; and for the divine agency to produce thought by the medium of the divine agency, is absurd; as the very production itself is a divine agency, and cannot be put forth by the medium of another divine agency.

So that it seems, that all this cry about the materiality of the soul and matter's thinking, comes to this, merely, that God sometimes, by his immediate agency, produces thought, where he produces certain other effects, called attraction and repulsion, or motion to and from certain points or centres. And if this were ever so true, could it with any propriety be called *matter's thinking*? or could it from these principles be inferred, that the human soul is material?

Yet it is manifest, that this scheme aimed at something further than this. It is expressly declared, "that sensation and thought do necessarily result from the organization of the brain, when the powers of mere life are given to the system."* How to reconcile this with what was just now quoted from the same author, that everything and every action is the effect of the divine agency, and this, as has been just now shown, an *immediate* agency, I must leave others to inform us.

Besides, that sensation and thought should necessarily result from the organization of the brain, when the powers of mere life are given to the system, is not reconcilable with what this same

* Correspondence between Price and Priestly, p. 256.

author holds, concerning a man in a deep sleep. It will not be pretended, but that the brain of such a man is well organized, and that the man is alive. Yet it is asserted, that the soul of a man in that situation ceases to think. From this it follows, that thought does not necessarily or always result from the organization of the brain, when life is added.

It is said that "in all other cases we deem it sufficient to say, that certain circumstances are the causes, and the necessary causes of certain appearances, if the appearances always accompany the circumstances."* But the appearances of thought and reason do not, according to the concessions of our adversaries themselves, always accompany life, and the organization of the brain. Therefore, by their own concession, thought and reason do not necessarily result from the organization of the brain, and animal life.

It is said, that "the whole man," meaning soul and body, "is of the same uniform *composition*;"† and that man is a "*homogeneous* substance." It seems then, that man is a *composition*, and yet *compounded* of *one* substance only. But a *compound* is usually made up of *various ingredients*. But passing this, of what substance is man compounded? Matter is said to be a mere compasses of mathematical points, the centres of attraction and repulsion. These points then are no substance at all. Nor are attraction and repulsion substances. Therefore, if the whole man be compounded, or consist of matter, and this account of matter be just, man is compounded of no substance at all, and is no substance, either homogeneous or heterogeneous.

Again, we are told, that substance is the unknown support of properties.‡ But the support of attraction and repulsion, which are acknowledged to be divine agencies, must be the Deity himself. Then it follows, that the substance of matter is God himself; that the Deity is a material being or substance; and if the whole man consist of matter, he consists of the divine essence, and the Deity is the τὸ πᾶν, or the *universe*.

Such are the consequences to which this scheme of the materiality of the human soul necessarily leads us.

2. It was proposed to consider more directly, some of the arguments by which it is attempted to be proved, that the human soul is material.

These are principally the following: That man can exercise thought and reason as long as his brain is in a state of soundness; but they cease when the brain is destroyed; therefore, as reason

* Correspondence between Price and Priestly, p. 258.

† Ibid. p. 256. ‡ Ibid. p. 364.

and thought depend on the brain, it is concluded, that the soul is the brain. On this I beg leave to observe,

(1) That if it were ever so true, that thought depends on the brain, still it may be an act of an immaterial substance. It will not be pretended, that everything on which the exercise of thought and reason depend, is the soul. If this were true, we should be able to prove, that the trunk of the body, the heart, the lungs, the neck, etc. are the soul; as thought and reason, in our present state, depend on every one of these.

(2) It is not true, that a man can exercise thought and reason as long as his brain is in a state of soundness, if, as is holden by the advocates for the materiality of the soul, man ceases to think in a deep sleep, and in a swoon.

(3) As to that observation, that thought ceases when the brain is destroyed; this no more proves the brain to be the soul, than the same argument would prove the trunk of the body, and the several vital parts of it, to be the soul.

3. Another argument to prove the materiality of the soul, is, that the souls of brutes are material, and that they appear to be analogous to human souls. But it is not granted that the souls of brutes are material. The argument to prove that they are material, is, that they cease or are annihilated at death. In reply to this I observe, that if they were annihilated at death, this would not prove, that they are material. God may annihilate a spirit as well as matter. But that they are annihilated is not an agreed point, among either philosophers or divines.

4. Another argument is, that the soul appears to grow and to decay with the body; that when the body is in its infancy, the powers of the soul are, in correspondence to those of the body, feeble and imperfect; that as the body grows, they increase in strength; and as the body decays, they decay. The answer to this is, that all this may be consistently enough with the supposition of the immateriality of the soul. The connection between the soul and body may be such as to produce these effects. Therefore they are no proof either for or against the immateriality of the soul.

These are the principal arguments urged to prove, that the soul is matter; and the force of them I submit to the judgment of the learned and the judicious.

If, after all, it be said, that though thought is the immediate effect of the divine agency, and does not necessarily result from the organization of the brain, and from animal life; yet God always produces thought in an organized brain, and never without it; as he produces gravitation in all matter, and never without

it; so that thought is as much a property or effect of matter, as gravitation, and that this is sufficient to answer every purpose wished for by the advocates of the materiality of the soul; and that on this plan we shall have thought, as long as we have an organized brain, and no longer. To all this I answer:

1. That it is not true, on the principles of the materialists themselves, that we have thought as long as we have an organized brain; for they hold, that in a deep sleep, and in a swoon, thought ceases. Yet, in these cases, and especially in a deep sleep, it will not be pretended, that the brain is disorganized.

2. To say, that we are never the subjects of thought any longer than the brain remains entire and properly organized, is to suppose that the soul dies with the body, which is a mere begging of the question.

FREE AGENCY AND ABSOLUTE DECREE RECONCILED.

Question. How can we be free, if all things be absolutely decreed by God?

The answer to this question wholly depends on the meaning of the word *free*. If by *liberty* be meant *uncertainty*, it is impossible that we should be free in the case supposed in the question; because a divine decree causes or implies a certainty of the event decreed. But if by *liberty* be meant *spontaneity*, and exemption from such force as admits of entire opposition of the will of the agent, there is no inconsistence between the most absolute decree and liberty; because with regard to all those actions which are pretended on any plan to be free, they are voluntary; and just so far as they are so, they are free in this sense of liberty; and to ask how a voluntary action can be free, if it be absolutely decreed, is as absurd as to ask, how a *free* action can be free, if it be absolutely decreed. The most absolute decree is no more opposed to liberty in this sense of it, than it is opposed to anything else; and we might as well say, that an action cannot be benevolent or malevolent, if it be absolutely decreed, as that it cannot be free. Even many firm believers in absolute decrees, acknowledge, that they cannot reconcile that docrine with human liberty; yet they firmly believe both. But I conceive, that there is not the least difficulty in reconciling them, if *liberty* be explained; nor can I conceive, that liberty is capable of any other than one of the forementioned senses; either uncertainty and contingence, or spontaneity and exemption from involuntary com-

pulsion; i. e. such compulsion to which the will is, or may be entirely opposed. As to liberty of *self-determination*, or the causation of volition, by ourselves, if this were possible, and were decreed by God, or by any means were rendered previously certain, there would be no more liberty in it than if we did not cause our own volitions; because we should still be tied down to cause those particular volitions, and no others. So that this mighty question which has agitated the christian world for ages, is easily answered, if we only explain what we mean by liberty.

[*One or two queries were made on the above article by a writer in a subsequent part of the volume, to which the following is an answer.*]

The author of the piece inserted in this Magazine, vol. ii. page 151, requests either the author of a former piece on the subjects of free agency and decrees, or *some other writer*, to solve "the knot," which he proposes. Therefore I shall attempt the solution. The knot is thus stated by the author himself. "The free actions of men, according to our author's (a former writer's) theory, are effects, and must be produced, either mediately or immediately by divine power. They are, therefore, in this respect, as passive as the earth was in creation. Now is there no difficulty in conceiving how actions, which, though free with respect to their nature, are passive with respect to their cause, should constitute the agent, the proper object of praise or blame?"

On this statement of the difficulty I remark,

That the principal ground of difficulty with our author is, that "the free actions of men are supposed to be *effects*, and produced either mediately or immediately by divine power." But does our author suppose, that the free actions of men are *not effects*? If so, they are either self-existent and eternal, or come into existence without cause, and by mere chance; neither of which will be pretended. Therefore, our author himself must allow, that the free actions of moral agents are *effects* of some cause or other. Whatever that cause be, whether it be the divine power, or any other power extrinsic to the subject of the actions, is immaterial as to the freedom of those actions. Is it not immaterial as to their freedom, whether my actions be the effects of the wind, the rays of the sun, the power of an angel, or the power of God? If in any one of these cases they be "as passive as the the earth was in creation," they are equally passive in all the rest. If, therefore, there be a difficulty in the theory opposed by our author, it is a difficulty which attends the theory of our author himself; unless

he deny the free actions of moral agents to be effects. For if he should hold, that they are effects, not of any extrinsic cause, but of the person himself, who is the subject of them, still those actions are equally *effects*, and equally passive with respect to their cause, as if they be the effects of any *extrinsic* cause. Suppose a man cut off his own hand, the effect is equally passive, as if it were cut off by any other man; it is as passive as the earth is in its creation. And if that act of the will, by which he determines and wills to cut off his hand, be the *effect* of the man himself, still *this* effect, in its production, is as passive as the effect of any other cause. Therefore, our author's words may be retorted: "Now is there no difficulty in conceiving how actions, which, though free with respect to their nature, are passive with respect to their cause, should constitute the agent, a proper object of praise or blame?" These words imply, that an action, which is the proper object of praise or blame, must *not* be passive with respect to its cause; i. e. it must not be produced by its cause. But how this is possible, our author must inform us.

Our author proceeds to illustrate his objection: "Let it be supposed, that my neighbor possesses, and unawares, and without my *previous consent*, exerts a power to change my disposition, from benevolence to malice, by striking me with a magic wand, or some other way; should I be blamable for exercising a malicious disposition? Would not all reasonable men exculpate and pity me? Would they not say, he was benevolent, and would have continued so if it had not been for his wicked neighbor. It is therefore not his fault, but his neighbor's. This supposition may, perhaps, in some measure, serve to illustrate the *real* difficulty, which lies in the minds of those who object to the doctrine of the divine decrees." If this illustrate the *real difficulty*, it deserves our particular attention. The argument here urged is, that if a malicious disposition be produced in me, *without* my previous consent, I am not blamable for exercising it. This implies, that if it be produced *with* my previous consent, I am blamable for the exercise of it. If so, then our author gives up his former argument, and rests his cause on a new one. His former argument was, that we are not blamable for acts in the production of which we are *passive*. But in the case now proposed, I am entirely passive in the production of a malicious disposition; it is produced in me by another, only I consent to its production, and therefore am blamable for the exercise of malice.

Or, perhaps, to avoid this inconsistence, our author may explain himself to mean, not that I am blamable for the exercise of malice produced in me by another, but merely for my consent to its pro-

duction. Be it so; then the question will arise, how came this *consent* into existence? Did it come into existence without cause? This will not be pretended. Did I cause it myself? Then doubtless I caused it by a causing or efficient act, and this efficient act is as distinct from the consent produced, which is the effect, as any cause is from its effect. Again; this causing act is also an effect, and requires a cause. This cause must, for the same reason as before, be myself, and I myself must cause it by an efficient act; and thus we must run into an infinite series of acts causing one another, which is absurd and impossible. The same absurdity will attend the supposition, that the *consent* now in question, was caused in me by some extrinsic cause, but with my previous consent. That previous consent requires a cause, and for the same reason my previous consent must concur to the causation of that, and so on to infinity; so that there is no other possible supposition, than that the consent, that my neighbor should produce malice in me, was caused by some extrinsic cause without my *previous* consent. And if I be blamable for this consent, thus brought into existence without my consent, why may I not be equally blamable for a malicious disposition brought into existence in the same manner?

The truth is, that if malice, however caused, be not blamable, it is not blamable in any case. And if malice, produced in me by my neighbor's magic wand, be not blamable, it never can be blamable. For whenever it does exist, it is produced by *some cause* extrinsic to him, who is the subject of it; and if our author will show, that he himself, or any other man, can efficiently produce an exercise of malice in himself, and avoid the absurdity of an infinite series of acts in the same man, begetting one another, he will do more than has ever been done by any opposer of the doctrine of decrees, from *Pelagius* down to the present time. The true solution of our author's difficulty is this, that the essence of the virtue and vice of benevolence and malice lies in the nature of those affections, and not in their cause.

THE PROOF OF GOD'S MORAL PERFECTIONS FROM SCRIPTURE.

Question. Can the moral perfections of God be proved from the scriptures alone, without any argument from the light of nature? *Answer.* It is agreed, that unless we previously know the moral perfections of God, we know not, when we read the scrip-

tures, that he speaks the truth; and therefore that he has drawn a true character of himself in the scriptures. It is, in this question, taken for granted, that we have evidence that the scriptures are a revelation from God. Therefore I say, that from the scriptures themselves we have the same evidence, that those scriptures are a revelation from a God of benevolence, as that they are a revelation from a God of wisdom. The whole scheme of redemption is evidently a benevolent scheme, as evidently benevolent as it is wise. To say that it is a malevolent scheme, would as manifestly be contrary to the import and tendency of it, as to say that it is foolish, and betrays a want of skill in the author. Now, if the scheme of the gospel be entirely and perfectly benevolent, suited to promote the glory of God and the happiness of the created system, to the highest degree, it argues, that the author of it is an entirely benevolent being. The argument is the very same that we might draw from the visible works of creation and providence, if they were manifestly in like manner conducive to the glory of God and the general good. Every part of scripture is full of holiness and benevolence; e. g. the divine law. Will it be pretended, that an unholy being is the author of the law? We might as well say, that an unskilful being is the author of the planetary system.

If the divine law be a proof of the divine holiness and goodness, the gospel is a still stronger proof of it; because it exceeds in glory, or in the display of holiness and goodness. The evidence of the holiness of God, in that case, is the same with the internal evidence, that the scriptures are a revelation from God. We argue, that the scriptures are a revelation from God, because of the transcendent wisdom and holiness which appear in them. So, I argue, that the author of the gospel scheme is a good being, because of the transcendent goodness and holiness which appear in it.

Objection. But how do we know that the gospel is true; or that God has taken, and will in future pursue those measures which are mentioned in the gospel, to exercise and display holiness and goodness? If we know not the divine veracity by other evidence, how shall we know that he has spoken the truth in the gospel? I answer, the gospel consists of two parts, which may be called, one the *moral*, and the other the *historical* part. By the moral part I mean all the duties prescribed in the gospel, as supreme love to God, benevolence to our neighbor, repentance, faith, humility, forgiveness of enemies, and love to them, prayer, divine worship in general, and the whole of new obedience, the examples of the gospel, particularly that of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the holiness of heaven, the nature of the rewards of virtue, as tending to promote virtue, the nature and tendency of the punishments of sin, to discountenance it.

By the *historical* part of the gospel I mean the declarations of facts, whether past or future; or history in the proper sense, and predictions, including promises and threatenings, as declarations of future facts. Now, from this last part of the gospel I do not at present argue the divine holiness and goodness; but from the former part I do, and may argue these divine attributes as properly as from the divine law. Surely none but a holy being would first give a character of God perfect in greatness, holiness and goodness, and then require us to love him supremely, to be followers of him as dear children, to be holy as he is holy, and perfect as he is perfect. No other being would require us to follow the perfect example of Christ; to love one another with a pure heart fervently; to do good to all, especially to the household of faith; to be meek and lowly of heart; to forgive and love our enemies; to repent of all our sins of heart and life, and to forsake them in future; and all this on the pain of the most dreadful but just punishment on the one hand; with the prospect of infinite and holy rewards on the other. In short, as the moral part of the gospel is manifestly conducive, in the highest degree, to the glory of God and good of the intellectual system, the author of it must be a holy and benevolent being.

In proportion as the holiness and goodness of God are displayed more clearly and uniformly in the law and gospel of God, than in the works of creation and providence; so much the stronger is the proof from them, of the divine moral perfection, than that which is drawn from creation and providence.

As to the objection arising from the evil in the world, this is expressly solved in scripture, in that it informs us, that it shall be overruled for good; which is not made known in any other way.

In addition to this, from the invariable fulfilment of the divine promises and threatening, so far as there has been time for it, and from the exact conformity of all divine declarations with truth, I may argue the divine veracity.

We all argue, that any person is a person of veracity, with whom we have had long intercourse, and have always found an exact conformity of all his words and declarations with truth. Now, mankind have had intercourse with the Deity for nearly six thousand years; in that time they have received from him many declarations, promises and threatenings; and in no one of them has there been found any deviation from truth or fact.

Many of the historical facts related in scripture are confirmed by authentic profane history. Others are confirmed by effects now remaining, as the flood, the confusion of tongues, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, etc. Many of the traditions, and the fables among the ancient heathen, were manifestly founded on the facts recorded in scripture, and are a confirmation of them. Now, if all the prophecies, promises and threatenings of scripture are fulfilled, which ought to be fulfilled according to the time, may we not hence infer, that those which remain unaccomplished will be accomplished in their proper time? If all historical narrations of scripture are confirmed by profane history, so far as that history undertakes to relate the events of those times and nations; and if all the effects of the events recorded in scripture remain to this day, which might be expected to remain; may we not hence infer the truth of the other narrations of scripture? If, in every instance in which there is opportunity for proof, the truth of the scriptures is indeed proved, may we not hence infer, that in those instances, with regard to which there is no opportunity for proof, the scriptures are written with the same exact regard to truth; and consequently, both from this circumstance and from the positive declarations of scripture, may we not conclude that the author is a being of strict veracity and perfect moral goodness?

From the historical part of scripture, and from its predictions as to this world and the world to come, we may, without taking the divine veracity for granted, argue the perfect moral character of their author, in this manner: Suppose the scripture a mere drama; this drama consists of a great variety of supposed facts, characters and scenes. But all these, taken together, most directly and powerfully tend to the encouragement of virtue and moral good, without anything. on the whole, of an opposite tendency. What is to be inferred from this concerning the author? Doubtless that he is a strong friend to virtue and moral good. In this manner we do, in fact, argue concerning all dramatic writers.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

It is commonly objected to this doctrine, that it implies *partiality*, *inconsistence* and *insincerity* in the Deity. Let us attend to these objections. *First*, Does the doctrine imply partiality in the Deity? This depends wholly on the meaning which we affix to the word *partiality*. If we mean by it, an inclina-

tion to bestow, in the way of sovereign wisdom, favor on one, and not on another, doubtless God is partial, in dispensing not only spiritual and eternal favors, but those which relate to this life. God makes one rich and another poor; raises one to great honor and promotion, and leaves another in a low and obscure state; gives one every advantage for enjoyment arising from tranquillity, health, agreeable connections, etc. but not to another. If, therefore, this be partiality, there is no reason to make this objection peculiarly against the doctrine of election; it lies equally against the most common dealings of providence. And if this objection be of force to disprove the doctrine of election, it is of the same force to disprove the governing providence of God, in the common events of life. Yet all christians profess to believe this common governing providence of God. Therefore they cannot, with consistence, object partiality to the divine election of a certain number to eternal life. If, indeed, the Deity exercise his sovereignty in election, not wisely, nor so as to subserve the best purposes, there is just ground of objection; and so there is, if he do not in common providence subserve the best purposes. But this stating of the objection gives up the objection to election as such, or to the general doctrine, that God chooses some to eternal life, and leaves others to suffer eternal death; and it raises another objection against the ends or purposes which God has in view, and actually subserves by election. Therefore it is incumbent on the objector to show, that God does not, in election, design and subserve the best and most important ends or purposes.

2. Sometimes the word partiality is applied to a judge, in the exercise of his judicial capacity; and I grant that whenever a person is partial to the parties brought before him, he violates his integrity; as partiality in this case implies, that the judge is disposed to favor a person beyond what the law, which is the rule of judgment, admits. The law is the sole rule of proceeding to a judge acting in a judicial capacity; but this is not the sole rule of proceeding to a sovereign, acting as a sovereign. His chief rule of proceeding is the general good; and in promoting this, he often is not only justifiable in acting beside and above strict law, but is necessitated to do it; and whenever the general good requires, that he bestow favor on one and not on another equally deserving, or ill deserving; not only is his conduct vindicable, but it could not be vindicated, if he were to do otherwise. And election is not the act of a judge, but of a sovereign.

Secondly, It is objected, that if God choose that a certain number of mankind should repent, comply with the gospel, and be saved; and that the rest should not comply, but should go on in

sin and perish, and yet command and call on all to comply with the gospel; this is to act an inconsistent part. His will that they should go on in sin, is inconsistent with his commands, and calls to forsake it and repent of it.

Answer. Undoubtedly, God on the whole chooses, that all who do finally go on in sin, should thus go on, otherwise he would restrain them. So it is proved by manifest fact, that God does, on the whole, or all things considered, choose, that all those who finally remain impenitent, should remain in that state. Even if what some have pleaded be true, that God cannot restrain a man from sin consistently with his free agency, still this would not disprove what is now asserted, that all things considered God chooses, that those who are finally impenitent, should remain impenitent. If he did not choose this, he would restrain them, and lead them to repentance, though their free agency should be destroyed. At the same time, it is an undoubted fact, that God forbids all sin. Therefore, if it be an inconsistence, that God should forbid all sin, and yet choose, all things considered, that some men should go on in sin, it is not an inconsistence peculiar to the system of those who hold the doctrine of election; but it equally attends the system of those who deny that doctrine; and it equally concerns the latter as the former, to provide a proper solution of the difficulty. If this be an inconsistence, it is a very common one, extending not only to the case of the reprobate and finally impenitent, but to every sinner and every sin, whether of commission or omission. The sins of the elect, whether before or after their conversion, are as peremptorily forbidden in the divine law, as the sins of the non-elect; and the fact shows, that God as really chooses, all things considered, that the elect should fall into these sins, as that the non-elect should into those of which they are guilty. Therefore, whenever any sin takes place, or whenever any person falls short of perfect holiness, God acts the same inconsistent part complained of in the objection before us; and God is no more inconsistent in reprobating a sinner, or choosing, all things considered, that he should finally go on in sin, and yet absolutely enjoin upon him a compliance with the gospel, than he does in choosing that a saint should not be perfectly holy in this life, and yet absolutely requiring of him perfect holiness. This then seems to bring down the objection very considably, and represents it in a much less formidable light. I have never heard it objected, that the Deity acts inconsistently in requiring perfect holiness, and yet choosing, all things considered, that a particular saint should not be perfectly sanctified in this life.

After all, there is no real inconsistence in the case stated in the objection. The law and precepts of God inform us what our duty is; but they do not inform us of his intentions as to the future dispensations of his providence. They inform us, that it is our duty to be perfectly holy, but do not inform us, that it is God's intention to make us perfectly holy in this life; or that all things considered, he chooses we should attain to perfection in this life. Therefore, when in the precepts of the divine law, God declares our duty to us, and in other passages of scripture he informs us, that it is his intention and choice, all things considered, that we should not be perfectly holy in this life, there is no contradiction; nor is there any inconsistence between enjoining duty upon us, and choosing, that we should not, in every instance, perform our duty. A human legislator may consistently forbid all rebellion against the state, and yet being fully assured, that if a certain man should rebel against the state, it would give occasion to the more firm establishment of the most just and free government, and to the great increase of the good of the nation, inconceivably overbalancing the evils of the rebellion, he may wish that man would rebel. A parent may strictly forbid his children to intoxicate themselves, and if he be assured, that provided his son, who has naturally a strong appetite for strong drink, and therefore is exposed to great and confirmed intemperance be once intoxicated, he will have such a loathing of strong drink in future, that he will never fall into intemperance again; he may consistently wish, that he would once intoxicate himself. With the same consistence, God may forbid sin, and yet in the foreknowledge of wise and important ends to be subserved by it, may consent and choose, that it should take place.

Thirdly; it is objected, that if God choose that some men should not comply with the gospel, and dispose things so in providence, that it infallibly follows, that they will not comply, there is no sincerity in the calls and offers of the gospel. This objection consists of two parts; 1. If God choose that some should not comply with the gospel, there is no sincerity in the calls and offers of the gospel. This wholly depends on the meaning of the word *sincerity*. If it mean, that when God offers salvation to any man, he really chooses, all things considered, that the man should be saved; I grant, that in this sense, there is no sincerity in the offer. But sincerity does not necessarily imply this, and is not always used in this sense; e. g. If my son should be disposed to quit his present state of residence, and remove to another, if it be ever so contrary to my judgment and wishes; yet if I find him fixed in the purpose, I may seriously offer him, that if he remove, I

will provide him a house in the proposed place. If a man have a son at college; if the son be sick of college, and utterly averse to continuing there, the father, from various proper motives may offer him, that if he be determined to quit college, he will set him up in trade or husbandry as the father shall judge to be best; yet he wishes that his son would not persist in his purposes. If in these cases the father intends to do as he says, provided the son fulfils the condition of the offer, the offer is sincere, though, at the same time, the father may wish, that the son should not fulfil the condition, i. e. in the instances above mentioned, the father may wish his son not to quit college, or to quit his present place of residence.

2. The other part of the objection is, that if God, in providence, set such motives before sinners, as to lead them to remain impenitent; or if he any how so dispose of events, that it certainly follows, that they will remain impenitent; there is no sincerity in the offers of the gospel. But if God may sincerely offer salvation to some men, and yet choose on the whole, that they should not accept the offer; why may he not, with the same sincerity, use any influence consistent with the free agency of those men, to dissuade them from a compliance with the condition of the offer? Why may not the parent in the case above stated, let the son know, that he does not think it best he should leave his present residence, and use all proper motives to persuade him to continue where he is; and yet, if he still be determined to remove, sincerely make him the offer before mentioned.

ON MORAL AGENCY.

A writer has raised this question: ***Is a capacity to know our duty necessary to moral agency?*** On this question I am willing to give my opinion, and the reasons.

The meaning of the question I conceive to be, whether a capacity to know our duty or obligation in any case, be necessary to the existence of moral obligation in that case; and whether duty or moral obligation bind us any further than our capacity to know our duty? In this sense of the question, I answer, that a capacity to know our duty is necessary to moral agency.

Capacity is power and opportunity. Power to know our duty is the power of rational understanding, and implies that the subject is a rational being; and if capacity to know our duty be not necessary to moral agency, neither is it necessary, that we be pos-

sessed of reason. But we may be as stupid as brutes, and yet be moral agents. Nay, brutes themselves may be moral agents. But as some may acknowledge the consequence, and hold that brutes are moral agents, let us attend to this before we proceed.

If neither actual knowledge of duty, nor a capacity to know it be necessary to moral agency; not only will it follow, that brutes are moral agents, but nothing appears but that they are moral agents in as high a degree as we are. The only reasons which can be assigned why they are not moral agents in the same degree that we are, are these; that we are capable of knowing more, and in most instances do know more than they. But if neither knowledge, nor a capacity of knowledge be necessary to moral agency, we may be moral agents in the same degree without as with them. If we knew, and were capable of knowing no more than the brutes, we should be just as accountable for all our conduct as we are now. Therefore brutes are in the same degree accountable as we are.

It will be in vain to pretend, that brutes are moral agents of a lower degree, according to their lower degrees of knowledge and capacity. This would imply that moral agency depends on capacity; and the greater this is, the higher is the degree of moral agency accompanying it; and the smaller the capacity is, the lower is the degree of moral agency. Hence it will follow, that if there be no capacity of knowledge in any degree, there is no moral agency. But a capacity of knowledge in any degree is a capacity to know our duty in the same degree. So that, on this state of the argument, either we may be moral agents without any capacity of knowing anything, and although we be as stupid as a door nail, which is absurd; or we are moral agents in the same degree in which we possess a capacity to know our duty, which is all for which I contend.

Besides; that the beasts are not moral agents is everywhere represented in scripture. Ps. 73: 22, "So foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee;" i. e. I, though a rational creature and a moral agent, acted as if I was as ignorant and stupid as a beast, who has no reason or moral agency. But if beasts be moral agents, the argument seems to have no force. For what wonder, if one who is a moral agent, and in the same degree as another, should act like that other? But that a rational being and moral agent should act like one that is no moral agent, and has no reason, is indeed wonderful. Prov. 30: 2, 3, "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy." If brutes be moral agents, they are as capable of the

knowledge of the holy, as they are of moral agency. Psal. 49: 12, "Man being in honor, abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish." If beasts be moral agents, the subjects of virtue and vice, and the proper subjects of eternal rewards and punishments, surely they no more perish than man. And can it be imagined, that if beasts were moral agents equally as man, equally accountable, and equally immortal, they would have been given to man, to be slaughtered by him for his meat? On this supposition, why should not man have been given to the beasts, to be their meat?

Besides; if beasts be moral agents, they are doubtless sinners, as they discover a general selfishness, and sometimes such anger and revenge, as in moral agents is very far from perfect holiness. But if they be sinners vile and polluted with sin, it would seem strange, that they should be made sacrifices, typical of the pure and perfect sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But to say no more concerning beasts, if an incapacity of knowing duty be not inconsistent with moral agency, natural inability to do duty is not inconsistent with it. For instance, in my present situation I am incapable of knowing the laws of the Emperor of China; and therefore, though I were one of his subjects, I should be no more bound to present observance of them, than if he were to make an edict, that I should fly to the moon. If God were now to publish in China the institution of a third sacrament, for the general use of mankind, we here should be immediately bound to observe it, before we had any information of it, unless an incapacity to know it, free us from obligation to observe it. On the same ground the heathen, who have never heard of the Savior, or of his sacraments, are to be condemned and punished for their unbelief in the former, and their neglect of the latter. If we had no more knowledge nor capacity than horses, why should we be more blamable than they, for any sensual gratification?

Capacity or power to know our duty, is necessary to moral agency, for the same reason that the requisite means of information concerning our duty in any particular case, is necessary to moral obligation in that case; for instance, that baptism and the Lord's supper are of divine institution. Now, a capacity or power of understanding sufficient to comprehend that information, is equally necessary to the possession of the information, as the external means requisite for the information; and therefore it is equally necessary to obligation to celebrate those divine institutions, as the external means of information, that they are of divine institution, and therefore obligatory. But I presume none will deny, that the requisite external means of information with regard to the sacraments, are necessary to obligation to celebrate

them. For the same reason, capacity to understand that information is necessary to the same obligation, for it is a necessary means of information; and so in all cases of duty.

I presume it will be granted, that knowledge, and the capacity and means of the knowledge of our duty, aggravate sin in any case, and that the less knowledge, and the less capacity for knowing duty a person has, the less is his sin. Sin then is diminished in the same proportion as the capacity of knowledge is. And why is it not entirely extinguished when the capacity is? Surely some substantial reason must be given to show that this is not the effect.

Where no law is, there is no transgression. But can a law be said to exist with regard to a person who has no power or capacity to know the law? Suppose God should send us a law written in the language of the Nawdowessies, would it be a law with respect to us, so that, without any means of knowing its contents, we should be bound to obey it? I presume all candid men would say, that it is no more law to us, or binding on us, without the necessary means of knowing the tenor of it, than if it never had been made.

It will not be denied, that no law is binding on a creature which is not a just and a good law, subservient to the general good; and that God is incapable of enacting any other than such a law. Now, is not a law requiring services, which the creature, if he be ever so attentive and candid, and though he be perfectly holy, is incapable of understanding, an unjust law? And is it not manifest, that such a law would not be a good law, and not subservient to the general good or the glory of God? If so, then God has never made such a law, and can no more make it, than he can deny himself; and therefore we neither are, nor can be under such a law; which is the same as to say, we neither are nor can be bound to do anything which we are incapable of knowing to be our duty; because God is incapable of making a law requiring of us any such thing.

Sins of invincible ignorance have hitherto been allowed to be no sins. But the principle which I am opposing is a direct contradiction to that hitherto acknowledged maxim.

The scriptures plainly support the sentiment for which I plead. Rom. 1: 20, 21, "So that they are without excuse; because that when they *knew* God they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful;" implying, that if they had not known God, or had not had the means, opportunity, and *capacity* of that knowledge, they would not have been without excuse. Verse 18, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all un-

righteousness, and ungodliness of men, *who hold the truth* in unrighteousness." It seems then, that the wrath of God is not revealed against those who do not *hold the truth* in unrighteousness, but are entirely incapable of holding it. John 15: 24, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." Chap. 9: 41, "If ye were *blind*, ye should have no sin; but ye say, *we see*; therefore your sin remaineth."

I shall now consider some objections to the sentiment for which I plead. It is said in the piece above referred to, "if by *capacity* be meant something distinct from all mental perception and knowledge, and antecedent to all such perception, it is not easy to discern the influence which *this* can have on actual mental exercise, in determining its quality." The power of reason in man is something distinct from mental perception and knowledge, and antecedent to it; and has not this an influence to determine the moral quality of the mental exercises of those who possess reason? A beast takes his chief pleasure in animal gratifications; some men do the same. The last are acknowledged to act a criminal part in this instance; the first are generally acknowledged to be innocent. The reason generally given for the innocence of the latter is, that they are not possessed of rational powers. And what other reason can be given for it? or for the difference as to innocence in this instance between beasts and men? If no other reason can be given, this doubtless is the true reason; and if this be the true reason, something, which is distinct from mental perception and antecedent to it, has influence in determining the moral quality of mental exercise, whether we can discern how it has this effect or not. If reason be not necessary to moral agency, an oyster may be as virtuous and holy as the apostle Paul, or as wicked as Judas. Will it be pretended, that madmen and perfect idiots are as really accountable for their anger, malice and revenge, as they would be, if they were in possession of their reason? Yet if they had the power of reason, they would be accountable for those exercises. Therefore something distinct from mental perception and antecedent to it, would determine the moral quality of their exercises.

External means of grace, opportunities to know the truth, and to be persuaded to embrace it, have an influence to aggravate sin; i. e. to determine the moral quality of exercises of the heart; yet they are distinct from those exercises, and may be and commonly are antecedent to them.

It is further pleaded, that "the supposition, that any, either power or capacity, of this sort, has any such influence, would im-

ply that both virtue and vice depend on the nature and quality of their cause." But the power of reason, external means, opportunities, the calls and invitations of the gospel, etc. are not the *efficient* causes of virtue or vice, they are however the occasions, or *causa sine qua non*, as it is said. Therefore, though virtue and vice depend on the power of reason, and, in many cases, on external means, opportunities, etc. yet they do not depend on the *nature* and *quality* of their *efficient* cause. They do indeed depend on the nature of *their subject*, so that they cannot take place in a block or a brute, as they can in a rational being.

It is further said, "the nature and quality of mental exercises and perceptions are to be found in those perceptions, and belong to them." But if the exercise be merely animal, without a power in the subject to know, that his animal affections ought to be governed by reason, and a regard to the general good; to say, that it is of a moral nature, as when the same animal affection exists in the mind of a rational being, is a mere begging of the question; and implies, that brutes are moral agents as well as men. Supreme self-love, or selfishness, is found in an ox, and it is found in a man. The nature and quality of this exercise, so far as is independent of reason and other things extrinsic to the exercise itself, may be the same in both instances; yet it cannot be asserted that in both instances they are equally vicious and deserving of punishment.

The principal plea in all these objections is, that what is distinct from a moral exercise and antecedent to it, can have no influence on its moral quality. But it is confessed on all hands, that the knowledge of duty has an influence on moral exercise, and greatly aggravates sin. "He that knoweth his master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." For instance, he that knoweth, that selfishness is wrong, is more aggravatedly sinful than he who has not that knowledge, and is the subject of the same selfishness. But knowledge in this case is something distinct from the moral exercise, and may be antecedent to it. Therefore, the maxim of our author, "that nothing which is distinct from moral exercise, and antecedent to it, has the least influence in determining its natural quality," does not hold good.

The whole question is, what is necessary to constitute a moral agent? A moral agent is a proper subject of moral government; and moral government is a government by laws and sanctions, by offers, proposals, and rational motives. But how can a being, who is not capable of knowing laws and sanctions, offers, proposals, and rational motives, be the proper subject of such government?

DEISTIC OBJECTIONS, WITH ANSWERS.

1. The gospel was first published among an ignorant, obscure, and superstitious people, and therefore obtained credit among them; and at the same time, was neglected by other nations, because they despised the Jews, and knew their superstition.

Answer. The Jews were the least superstitious, the most knowing, and best informed in religion, of all the nations then in the world. No nation had so just and rational ideas of God and religion. Therefore, a false and absurd scheme of religion was not so likely to obtain credit among them, as among any other nation. And if the Jews and their religion were neglected and despised by other nations, this surely could be no reason why they received and practised that religion. Besides, if christianity spread among other nations, because they despised and neglected the Jews and their superstition, why, for the same reason, did not Judaism spread equally as christianity? The Jews compassed sea and land to make one proselyte. In proportion as the Jews and their religion were despised by other nations, the probability was the less, that christianity would be received from them by those nations.

2. The learned and benevolent Pliny, and other learned and good men, would have received the gospel, if it had been credible, and the facts true.

Answer. It is exactly according to the gospel, that many learned men should neglect it. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." Some great and learned men, in all ages, have accordingly rejected the gospel. If it had been otherwise, it would have been a good argument against the gospel. And it might have been just as forcibly argued, that Hume did not believe the gospel, therefore it is not true, as that Pliny did not believe it, therefore it is not true. If they both had believed it, it would have been no demonstration of its truth.

3. Christianity was soon persecuted, and persecution always spreads the religion which is persecuted. No wonder then christianity soon obtained an extensive footing.

Answer. It is not true, that persecution always makes the religion persecuted prevail, as christianity prevailed. Paganism was persecuted by the christian Roman emperors; Mohammedanism was greviously persecuted in Spain; heathenism, in South America, by the Spaniards; and Judaism has generally, in all ages, suffered persecution. Yet none of these religions flourished and

increased under persecution, as christianity did. Therefore, there was something peculiar to christianity; and what could this be, but the manifest truth of the facts; on which it was founded, and of the doctrines which it taught?

4. It was at first tolerated at Rome, till it obtained a footing; and after that it was impossible to root it out.

Answer. It is curious to observe, the inconsistence of the objections, which the enemies of christianity bring against it. In the last objection, the prevalence of christianity was attempted to be accounted for by the persecution which it suffered. Now the same thing is accounted for by the toleration afforded to it. Besides, though it was at first tolerated, this no more rendered the extirpation of it impossible, than the toleration, and even establishment of paganism in the Roman empire rendered the extirpation of that impossible, or than the toleration of Mohammedanism in Spain precluded the possibility of the extirpation of that.

5. The doctrine of the Trinity is absurd and incredible.

Answer. That God should in one respect be one, and in another respect three, is nothing absurd or inconsistent, though indeed we cannot comprehend it. That we cannot clearly conceive of the tri-unity of Deity, no more disproves it, than our inability to conceive clearly of the divine nature or existence, disproves that nature or existence.

6. The institutions of Moses are irrational and absurd.

Answer. This is not granted, and must be proved before it can be admitted. We contend, that they are by no means absurd, but that they subserve various important uses. Indeed, it is to be supposed, that the opinions of depraved men would be very different concerning the most rational modes of divine worship; and some make this objection to the institutions of the gospel, and doubtless would, to all institutions, which can possibly be made.

7. The mysteries of scripture render it incredible. A revelation of mysteries is no revelation.

Answer. The mysteries of scripture, so long as God is infinite and mysterious, are so far from a ground of objection to its truth, that they are an argument in favor of it; and if there were no mysteries in scripture, that circumstance would be a full demonstration, that it is no revelation of the nature, attributes, mode of subsistence, will, works and designs of God. So long as God is infinite and mysterious, a revelation concerning God, must contain mysteries. Nor is it true, that a revelation of mysteries is no revelation. The incarnation of Christ is a mystery, yet the revelation of it is a revelation of an important truth.

8. The believers in christianity differ so widely in opinion con-

cerning the contents of scripture, that it seems nothing is to be known by it, and therefore it is no revelation.

Answer. The different opinions of christians concerning the truths of revelation, no more prove that it is no revelation, than the different opinions of deists concerning the various duties of the law of nature prove, that there is no such law; or than the different opinions of lawyers concerning the civil law prove, that there is no civil law. The truth is, that the minds, capacities, passions, educations, and prepossessions of men are so different, that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to give any revelation as large as the scripture, and relating to such a variety of doctrines and facts; concerning many parts of which men would not form different opinions.

9. The prophecies of scripture were either written after the events, or are so vague as to answer to various events, according to the various imaginations of men.

Answer. There are many prophecies, concerning which this cannot be pretended; as those of the antichristian apostacy, of the decline of the antichristian power, of the fall of the heathen Roman empire, and of the continance of the Jews as a distinct people. Nor are these promises so vague as to admit of various applications.

10. The apostles and first founders of christianity, were actuated by the motives of ambition, as Mohammed, Manco Capac, and the founders of other religions. They expected to be the heads of a large body of followers, and thereby became famous.

Answer. The apostles either believed the wonderful facts which they relate, or they did not. They could not believe that they saw Jesus, and conversed with him for forty days, and finally saw him ascend to Heaven, or saw him in his transfiguration, unless they really did see these things. Therefore, if they believed these facts, they really existed; and then the gospel is true. If, on the other hand, they did not believe those facts on which the gospel is founded, however great their ambition might be, they took the most direct way to fail of its gratification, to be convicted of the most palpable falsehood, to be loaded with shame instead of honor, and to be forever prevented from establishing a party. All this might have been done by disproving the facts which they alleged, which might most easily have been done, if they were mere fictions, as they were reported to be done in the most public manner, and on the most public occasions; as turning water into wine at a public wedding; the raising of Lazarus before a collection of the Jews on the occasion; the raising of the son of the widow of Nain, in a like public manner; the first

gift of tongues at the Pentecost; and even the resurrection of Christ.

How easy to have proved that the story of the raising of Lazarus was a mere fiction. How easy to have proved that the apostles, at pentecost, were not heard to speak various languages publicly. How easy to have proved that there was no earthquake at the time of the asserted resurrection of Christ. And if the priests and rulers believed the story of the soldiers, and of the stealing of the body by the disciples, what is the reason that there was no search made for it? This circumstance disproves the story. Not to mention the absurdity of the soldiers undertaking to testify what was done, while they were asleep. The utmost that they could say, was, that they fell into a sleep; that until they fell into this sleep the body was safe in the sepulchre; but when they awoke, it was gone; and that they *inferred*, that the disciples had stolen it. If they had really stolen it, it might, doubtless, in the time of it, have been made to appear at least probable, if not certain, from various circumstances, as by the tracks of men, at the sepulchre, in coming to it, and in departing from it; by the marks of their exertion in rolling away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre; and by their absconding immediately afterward, to escape conviction and punishment. "The wicked flee, when no man pursueth." It is, therefore, incredible, that if the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus, they should all remain at Jerusalem, and appear publicly on all occasions, as before. Equally incredible is it, that there should not be even the attempt to convict them of it. Surely the Scribes and Pharisees were not wanting in a disposition for it. If there were no earthquake at or about the time of the alleged resurrection, this, as observed before, might easily have been proved, and that would have overthrown the whole account of the apostles, or at least have gone very far toward it. If there were an earthquake, it was either before the alleged resurrection, after it, or at the very time of it. If it were before, is it probable that the soldiers would be so unaffected by it, as to fall into a deep sleep soon after it? Besides, the soldiers would have been able, directly, to contradict the account of the apostles, and might have united in testifying, that the body was secure in the sepulchre, until such time after the earthquake, that they were entirely over the surprise which they felt from the earthquake, and were fallen into a sound sleep. Or if the earthquake was after the alleged resurrection, still they would be able to contradict the apostle's account of its being, at the time, or immediately before the resurrection. Nor is this all; if the soldiers found that the body was missing before the earthquake, why did they not

immediately give notice, that pursuit and search might be immediately made, and the body recovered? If it be said, that the earthquake happened at the very instant of the alleged resurrection; on the supposition, that there was no resurrection, but that the body was stolen away by the disciples, the earthquake was at the very time at which the disciples were taking the body out of the sepulchre. Therefore, at this time the soldiers were either awake or asleep. If they were awake, they could, and doubtless would, have prevented the proceeding of the disciples. Besides, this supposition is contrary to their own account of the matter, that the body was stolen away while they slept. If the soldiers were asleep immediately before the earthquake, doubtless that did awaken them, and then being awake, they might have prevented the carrying away of the body, etc. There is but one other possible supposition, and that is, that the soldiers slept so long, that the disciples had time to come and carry off the body, and that when they were gone off with it, an earthquake happened, which, of course, must have awakened the soldiers. Still, in this case, the soldiers could have directly contradicted the account of the apostles, that the earthquake preceded the resurrection, and by it, and by the consequent appearance of an angel, the "keepers did shake, and become as dead men." They could have testified, that so far from this, by the earthquake they were awakened out of a sound sleep; and that, as to the angel, they saw nothing of him.

11. That the Jews remain a distinct nation to this day, may be accounted for from their peculiar customs of circumcision, not intermarrying with other nations, etc.

Answer. But how comes it to pass, that the Jews are thus peculiarly tenacious of their own customs? This is the very difficulty to be accounted for. Other nations have had their peculiar customs, and were, for a while, tenacious of them; yet have long since given them up, and conformed to the customs of other nations. The Greeks and Romans were wont to eat their meals, reclining upon a couch on one elbow; they had their gods, and believed, that their personal and national prosperity depended on their observance of their religious rites, their omens and libations, and that these rites were of divine authority. Yet they have long since lost all peculiarities, and lost all existence as distinct nations. Nor were the Jews or Israelites always tenacious of their peculiar customs. They neglected circumcision for forty years in the wilderness. And even after their return from the Babylonish captivity, they intermarried with the neighboring nations. Why do they not fall into the same practice now?

12. The reason why christianity so prevailed in the first age, is, that the idea that the world was nearly at an end, was then very prevalent, and many were greatly affrighted in that expectation.

Answer. That expectation would influence no man to become a christian, unless he was convinced that christianity was the truth. No man who expects the end of the world shortly will, to prepare for it, embrace a system of religion which he believes to be false. That expectation would indeed naturally set men to inquire, what is true religion, and what is the best way to prepare for our end; and the result of such inquiry would be to embrace that religion which, to the inquirer, appears to be the truth or the nearest to it. How came those, who, by their expectation of the end of the world, were excited to inquire after true religion, to embrace christianity? The answer must be, that there appeared to them convincing evidence of its truth. And surely the fact, that to the most serious, diligent and conscientious inquirers after true religion, who lived in the first age, when the facts on which Christianity is founded, were recent and well known, or easily capable of being ascertained or disproved; and who inquired after the truth in the immediate prospect of the end of the world, and of their appearance at the bar of God; christianity appeared to be supported by sufficient evidence, so that they embraced it as the only preparative for the judgment; is no presumptive argument against the truth of christianity, but a strong presumption in its favor.

Why did not the christians of that day, who shortly expected the end of the world renounce christianity and embrace paganism, that thereby they might be prepared for the judgment? The answer must be, that paganism did not appear to them to be the true religion. It is presumed that there never was an instance, in any age, of a person renouncing christianity and embracing another religion, or any scheme of infidelity, to prepare him for death or the end of the world. But there are instances in every age of infidels, who, in the prospect of death, have thought themselves utterly unsafe in their infidelity, and have embraced christianity, or at least have professed their conviction of the necessity of it to a preparation for death.

13. There is no need of the gospel or of any revelation. The perfect goodness of God ensures to us future happiness.

Answer. To make the goodness of God a rational ground of expectation of future happiness, we must have evidence, 1. That he is perfectly good; 2. That the general good does not forbid that we be made happy in the future world; 3. That we shall

attain to future happiness, either unconditionally, or on such conditions, as we do or may easily comply with.

1. We must have evidence that God is perfectly good. But what evidence of this has the infidel? The christian is assured of this by revelation; not only by its positive declarations, but by its whole scheme, by the contents and tendency of the law of the gospel, and of the whole bible. It all tends to infuse and promote holiness and goodness. But the infidel has no evidence of the divine goodness from these sources. All he knows concerning God is, by what he has done in the works of creation and providence. When he attends to these, he finds, that he has made a world, partly filled with good, and partly with evil. Therefore Hume, the most acute of infidels, asserts, that the only legitimate consequence to be drawn from such premises is, that the author of the world is partly good and partly evil. And Doctor Franklin, of whom infidels plume themselves much, informs us, that as God had given him a good lot in this world, he doubts not he will give him as good a one in the future world. All this implies, that on the principles of infidelity, nothing better is to be expected in the future state than we enjoy in the present. Therefore as we are very far from entire happiness in this world, we have no reason to expect it in the world to come. And as we have, on these principles, no evidence of the perfect goodness of God, we have no right to suppose that goodness, or to infer from the supposition of it, that we shall be happy.

Thomas Paine tells us, "I believe in one God, and no more; and *I hope for happiness beyond this life.*" It seems then, that he is uncertain about it; he barely *hopes* for it. Nor does he give any of us an assurance of it, on his principles. What encouragement then have we to embrace his principles, which leave us in such an important matter to *bare hopes?* Especially what reason have we to renounce christianity which gives us absolute assurance of future happiness to embrace Mr. Paine's system, which gives *bare hopes* of it? This would be a very unequal exchange. But on what ground does Mr. Paine "*hope* for happiness beyond this life?" Has he any *reason* for his hope? Or is it a mere fond imagination? I do not find that he has given any reason in his publications. Why he did not give us his reason or reasons; whether it was because he was conscious, that he had none to give; or whether he had not studied his subject so far as to discover, that on his principles no reason was to be given for it, I will not decide. But I presume he will not venture to give the same reason for *his hope* that Dr. Franklin gave for *his.* Whatever may be said of the Doctor's lot in this world, Mr. Paine

surely has no reason to boast of the goodness of his. Whatever popularity he might once have enjoyed, both in America and France, it was very short lived in both countries; in the latter, after a long imprisonment, he did but just escape the guillotine, and is now like to end his days in a manner grievously mortifying to his ambition. And that good God, who, in the course of his providence, has suffered so many sore calamities to befal Mr. Paine in this world, may suffer as great evils to befal him in the future world; he who brought him into prison, and so near to the guillotine, may cause him to feel the force of that, or some more dreadful instrument of punishment in the future world. In short, until Mr. Paine, or any other infidel, shall be able, on his own principles, to demonstrate the perfect goodness of God, he has no reason to expect, that in the future world he shall be treated more favorably than the scriptures represent concerning the wicked.

2. Supposing the perfect goodness of God, could on the principles of infidelity, be demonstrated, still, to make that goodness a just ground of the expectation of happiness in the future world, we must have evidence, that the general good does not stand in the way of that happiness, or does not require our misery. Though God is indeed perfectly good, yet, in this life we suffer various miseries. This, doubtless is, because God sees that the general good requires it. Otherwise the dispensation cannot be reconciled with perfect goodness. And as the general good requires our misery here, how do we know but that it may require it hereafter.

3. That we may rationally trust to the goodness of God for future happiness, and feel ourselves safe in that trust, we must know whether we are to attain to future happiness unconditionally; or, otherwise, what the condition or conditions are, and must also know, that we comply with the conditions. That we all, in some instances at least, deviate from the line pointed out to us, even by the law of nature and reason, I presume infidels themselves will acknowledge. Then arises the question, Will the author of nature, and of the law of nature, pass by with impunity, all our violations of his law, even though we persist in them? Or, if it be said, that repentance and reformation are necessary to the favor of the Deity and to future happiness; the question will arise, what degree of repentance and reformation are necessary? Must our subsequent obedience be entire and perfect? Or, shall we be entitled to future happiness by an imperfect obedience? That the man who imperfectly repents and obeys, is entitled to future happiness requires proof, before it can be rationally or safely believed. The penitent is in this life equally liable to ca-

lamity as the rest of men. And as the general good, and therefore the divine goodness do require, that he suffer calamity and misery here, they may, for aught appears, require the same hereafter. Nay, if the general good without an atonement, and viewing the penitent in his own character merely, do not require him to be punished, it is not just that he should be punished for the rules of justice in this case, are determined by the requirements of the general good. What is a just punishment of any crime but a punishment, which, in view of the crime only, is requisite to repair the damage done to the system by that crime? Now, if the system or the good of it in view of the conduct of the penitent sinner only, do not require that he be punished, it is not just that he be punished. Of course, justice requires that he pass with impunity, and he is incapable of pardon; nay, in the violation of the divine law, there is no moral evil.

I wish to make a further observation concerning the forementioned idea of Doctor Franklin, that because God gave him a good lot in this world, he doubted not that he would give him as good a one in the future. This goes on the ground, that every man is to be dealt with in the future world just as he is in this; that those who are most prosperous in this world, will be most prosperous in the future; and those who meet with the greatest trials and afflictions in this world, will be most wretched in the future. Now, would Dr. Franklin avow this? Would he maintain, that the man who, from his infancy, is possessed of a feeble constitution, and spends his days in pain, poverty and contempt, though ever so strictly just, and cordially benevolent; and the man of the same amiable character, who from a competency, is, by the fraud and oppression of his rich neighbor, reduced to poverty and distress, and is in various ways through his whole life, rendered miserable by his said neighbor, now become inveterately malicious toward him because he himself has injured him; will be more miserable in the future world, than any of those who live and die in prosperity, dissipation and vice?

OF SINNING NOT AFTER THE SIMILITUDE OF ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION.

"I also will show mine opinion." An exhibition of various opinions, with the reasons on which they are founded, may lead to real improvement; and as this exhibition may be made in the Theological Magazine, without offence, provided it be done can-

didly and with proper temper; for this reason, as well as others, I conceive it to be a useful work. It has long been a subject of inquiry, what the apostle means, Rom. 5: 14, by "them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." A writer in the Theological Magazine, vol. ii. p. 147, supposes, "that all who commit outward acts of wickedness, do sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression; and they, and they only, whose wickedness is visible only to God, do not sin after this similitude." Yet this author's opinion is, that the apostle in this passage meant infants. But do all except infants commit outward acts of wickedness visible to men? Perhaps this may be difficult to be proved. Even the scribes and pharisees were "whited sepulchres, which appeared beautiful to men;" they "made clean the outside of the cup and of the platter;" they "appeared righteous to men," Matt. xxiii. Besides, if it be the meaning of the apostle in Rom. 5: 14, that death reigned over infants, why does he observe that it reigned *from Adam to Moses?* It has reigned over them from Adam to the present time, as well as from Adam to Moses.

I therefore beg leave to propose another sense of the expression, "sinning not after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" which is this, *sinning not against a revealed law.* Adam sinned against a revealed law; so did the Israelites after Moses. But from Adam to Moses there was no standing revealed law. Yet all mankind, during that period, died, and their death proved that sin was imputed to them, or that they were sinners. But they did not sin against any revealed law, as Adam did, or as they did who lived under the law of Moses. In this respect, therefore, they did not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression.

I am sensible that this is a sense of the text, different from what is commonly put upon it. The common construction implies, that infants are those who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. It is commonly said that they have not sinned by any personal act as Adam did, but by imputation of Adam's sin. Now the imputation or transfer of Adam's sin to another person, does not imply, that the other person *sins* at all in the active voice; yet the text speaks of those who have in the active voice sinned not after the similitude of Adam's transgression.

The apostle's argument does not seem to lead him to say anything concerning infants. They are not mentioned in the context. What right then have we to suppose, without necessity, that he abruptly and obscurely introduces them?

THE SOUL IN THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

That the soul is in a state of insensibility, between death and the resurrection, is the avowed opinion of some. In opposition to this opinion, I take the liberty to suggest the following texts and observations on them.

2 Cor. 5: 6, 8, 9, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing, that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing, rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." These words inform us, that the apostle, and his fellow apostles and christians of that day, were willing to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord; and that they made it the object of their labor, that whether they should be absent or present, they might be accepted of him. This clearly shows their belief, that they might be absent from the body, and yet consciously present with the Lord. But this is not all. The text further informs us, that they were confident that this would be the case with them: "We are confident, I say, and willing, rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Acts 7: 59, "And they stoned *Stephen*, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my *spirit*." If *Stephen* had believed, that there was no intermediate or separate state, he would doubtless have expressed himself very differently. He would naturally have said, Lord Jesus, receive me, or receive my body and spirit, at the resurrection.

Matt. 10: 28, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Now, if the soul dies and revives with the body, what can be the meaning of this text? In this case, as the life of the soul depends on the life of the body, he that is able to kill the body, is able to kill the soul too. This text seems necessarily to imply, that the soul will survive the body.

Heb. 12: 22, 23. "But ye are come—to the *spirits* of just men made perfect." Lest it should be said, that these spirits of just men made perfect, mean the saints in the resurrection state, we may observe, that the scriptures have explained their idea of spirits very clearly.

John 4: 24, "God is a spirit, and they that would worship him, must worship him in spirit and truth." It is granted, I suppose,

by those who hold the opinion now opposed, that God is an immaterial being. By spirit then, the scriptures mean an immaterial being. Again,

Luke 24: 37, 39, "But they were terrified, affrighted, and supposed they had seen a *spirit*. And he said unto them—behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." This is a further demonstration, that the scriptures, by spirit, mean an immaterial being or substance. And that by the spirits of just men made perfect, cannot be intended the saints in the resurrection state, appears from this, that they then will be no more *spirits*, than the saints in this world are, or than our Lord was, at the time when he said, "Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

2 Peter 1: 13, 14, "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am with you in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance, knowing, that I shall shortly put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." Here the apostle expressly declares, that he must shortly put off this tabernacle; i. e. be separated from his body; and that the Lord had shown it to him. This would not be true, if his soul were to die with his body.

1 Thess. 5: 9, 10, "God hath not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." Waking and sleeping are commonly used in scripture, to signify bodily life and death. Nor does it appear, that this passage will bear any other construction. If it will not it is a clear and direct declaration, that whether the bodies of true christians be dead or alive, their souls shall be alive, and be with Christ.

Phil. 1: 21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor; yet what I shall choose, I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and be with Christ; which is far better." For the apostle to die, could be gain on no other ground, than that he was to be in a state of sensibility and happiness immediately after death. On the supposition, that his soul died, or fell into a torpor, at the death of his body, and was to be revived with it at the resurrection; what gain could he have obtained by death at that time, more than if he should have lived ten years longer? In either case he would, by the promises, be entitled to eternal glory in the resurrection state. By dying at the time he wrote, he would lose all that happiness which he might enjoy, in spiritual exercises, in communion with God and Christ; in being the

instrument of the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, in building up the kingdom of Christ in the world, and in any temporal good improved by divine grace. Therefore, if he had died at that time, he would have been a loser, instead of gainer. Nor is this all. By continuing in life, he would have made further proficiency in the christian life, would have done more for the honor of God, and for the kingdom of Christ, and therefore would have been entitled by promise, to a greater degree of happiness in the resurrection state; and this greater degree of happiness would have been extended to all eternity. So that, in reality, the apostle would have been an infinite loser by death at that time. He would have lost a certain degree of happiness, doubtless equal to the whole heavenly happiness of some saints, and this degree of happiness running through eternity, would be a sum of happiness, as truly infinite as the whole eternal happiness of some real saints. As, therefore, those saints, by the loss of their whole heavenly happiness, would sustain an infinite loss; so would the apostle, if he had lost that additional degree of happiness to which he would have been entitled by his continued life and usefulness. We can make nothing of this text, but upon the supposition, that his soul died not, or did not fall into a torpor with his body.

1 Pet. 3: 19, 20, "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." Now, unless we allow the soul, after the death of the body, to exist in a state of sensibility, in what sense can the spirits of the sinners of the old world be said to be in prison? Their spirits were no more in prison, than their bodies; or than the spirits of the most eminent saints.

Eccl. 12: 7, "Then shall the dust return unto the earth, as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." How can this be reconciled with the doctrine, that the soul at death falls into a state of perfect insensibility till the resurrection? A distinction is made between the dust, the material part of man, and the spirit or immaterial part. The former is said to return unto the earth; the latter to return unto God. But how return to God? In a perfect stupor, or destitution of all thought and sense? This will not be pretended. Therefore it must return in a state of sensibility.

Luke 23: 12, "And Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." This would not be true, if the soul of this thief on the cross were to be in a state of insensibility from death to the resurrection. If it be said,

that the meaning is, that as the thief would be conscious of nothing between death and the resurrection, his being with Christ at the resurrection would seem to him to have been the same day on which he died, or immediately after his death; I answer, this would be to talk without example, and, in a manner, not intelligible to mankind in general. Would it not be unintelligible, and without example, to tell a man who had been a whole day in a sound sleep, and who was wholly ignorant of the time, which had elapsed during his sleep, that it was but a minute since he had fallen into sleep? Or would there be any propriety or truth in saying, that Lazarus, who lay dead four days, was raised on the same day, and even immediately after his death? Not an instance of such a use of language can be found in all the scriptures, nor in any approved uninspired author. Yet this would have been just as true and proper, on the ground of this objection, as our Lord's telling the thief on the cross, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Lazarus, on the hypothesis now under consideration, would no more have perceived any time between his death and resurrection, than the thief would have perceived time between his death and the general resurrection.

Luke 16: 22—28, "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom; and he cried, and said, father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, son, remember, that thou, in thy life-time receivedst good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come unto this place of torment." This is a very plain representation, that Abraham, Lazarus, and the rich man, were all in a state of existence and sensibility, between death and the resurrection, and while the brethren of this rich man were still in this life. Therefore their souls did not die, nor fall into a torpor at death. I know it is said, that this is a parabolical representation. I grant it; but parabolical representations are designed to teach truth, and not falsehood. Now, unless this parable does teach direct falsehood, the souls of Abraham, Lazarus and the rich man were in existence and sensibility in a state of separation from their bodies; and, by parity of reason, this is true of all mankind.

Several representations in the book of the Revelation teach us, that the dead, especially the dead saints, are in a state of sensibility between death and the resurrection.

Chap. 5: 9, 10, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast *redeemed us* to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation, and hast made us, unto our God, kings and priests; and *we shall reign on the earth.*" The persons here speaking, are saints redeemed from among men; the place in which they were seen and heard by the apostle to sing this song, was heaven, as is manifest by the preceding context, and by chap. 4: 4, 6. And the time was manifestly before the resurrection, because it is said in the words themselves, "We shall reign on the earth." These words, whether we believe the reign of the saints on the earth to be before or immediately after the general resurrection, prove, that the time at which they were spoken was before the resurrection. Also, it is manifest, from the text taken with the context, that the time of singing this song, was at the time of the Lamb's taking the book sealed with seven seals, and previous to the opening of them, i. e. previous to the great events and dispensations of providence concerning the christian church.

Chap. 6: 9, 10, "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." On these words we may observe, that the apostle has a vision of the souls of the martyred saints pleading for vengeance. But, on the supposition, that the souls of all men at death, fall into perfect insensibility, they no more plead for vengeance than their bodies do. That this pleading of the martyrs for vengeance on their enemies, is before the general resurrection, is implied in the nature of the case; for, after that resurrection, full vengeance will be executed on those enemies, and there will be no occasion, that the saints should plead for vengeance. Besides, this pleading was under the fifth seal, and immediately on the opening of it. But several other seals, trumpets and vials followed this seal, before the resurrection.

Chap. 7: 13, to the end; "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, what are these, which are arrayed in white robes? Whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them

white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple," etc. That this is a representation of what was to take place before the resurrection, is manifest from this, that it was under the sixth seal, and before the opening of the seventh; and the events of the seventh seal will be accomplished before the resurrection. But in this same scene, taking place thus before the resurrection, the inspired apostle saw those who had come out of great tribulation, and who had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, standing before the throne of God, and serving him day and night in his temple; which implies both existence and sensibility.

Chap. 14: 13, "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, Blessed are *the dead* which die in the Lord, from henceforth saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." These blessed persons were *the dead*, and not those who are raised from the dead; for these last are *alive*. And they, dead as they are, are said to rest from their labors, and their works are said to follow them; i. e. the effects of their works follow them, in that they receive the reward of them. But this could not be truly said of them if they were in a state of insensibility, and were dead in both soul and body.

I know not how to reconcile these sacred passages, with a torpid state of all souls from death to the general resurrection.

SHORT COMMENTS ON NEW TEXTS.

1. "What is the amount of all his prayers, but an attempt to make the Almighty change his mind, and act otherwise than he does. It is as if he were to say, *thou knowest not so well as I.*" —*Thomas Paine.*

This, according to Mr. Paine, is the amount of all prayers to the Deity. But he tells us, that "he *hopes* for happiness beyond this life." Therefore he is not *sure* of it, he barely *hopes* for it, and thinks it "probable." And how does he hope to attain to that happiness? Doubtless, by the gift of that "one God," in whose existence he professes a belief. And if he should pray that one God to bestow this gift upon him, which he is not sure that he will, would Mr. Paine herein tell the Almighty, "thou knowest not so well as I?" Mr. Paine tells us, "I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and *endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy.*" It is then, ac-

cording to him, a religious duty to endeavor to make our fellow-creatures more happy than God has made them. And is not this as really saying to God, "thou knowest not so well as I," as it would be to pray God, that he would permit and assist us to accomplish the happiness of others, which is, or ought to be the object of our endeavor? When Mr. Paine published his *Age of Reason*, he doubtless did it to instruct his fellow creatures, i. e. to communicate more instruction to them than God had communicated. But what is this, on his principle, but saying, "thou knowest not so well as I," how much instruction men ought to have? Whenever Mr. Paine spoke, or had his speech read, in the National Convention, it was doubtless to give some information, or to persuade the Convention to adopt some measure which it had not adopted; i. e. he endeavored to give information, which God had not given, and to lead that body into a measure, into which God had not led them; or, in one word, he attempted to bring to pass an event which God had not brought to pass. And what is this, on the principle quoted above, but saying to the Almighty, "thou knowest not so well as I?" Whenever a person applies to a physician, or uses any medicine to cure him of any disease; whenever the husbandman clears his land of trees, brushes or weeds; whenever he ploughs or hoes it; whenever he mows the grass, reaps the grain, or gathers the fruits of his trees; as in all these cases something is done or attempted to be done different from what God has done, the agent says to God, on the forementioned principle, "thou knowest not so well as I." In short, this principle equally forbids all human action, as it forbids us to pray. For whenever Mr. Paine, or any other man, writes, speaks, walks, or acts in any form, he brings to pass, or attempts to bring to pass, something which God had not already brought to pass. Therefore, as Mr. Paine would avoid the impiety of saying to God, "thou knowest not so well as I;" he must, in future, be as torpid as a serpent in winter; and at the same time, ought severely to repent of his past impiety, in that he has ever done a single action.

2. "The Creator has made nothing in vain."

This is very frequently asserted by Mr. Paine.

But has not the Creator made death, sickness, pain, sorrow, disappointment, mortification, bereavement, affliction, storms, shipwrecks, earthquakes, inundations, drought, famine, and desolation? For what end has he made these things? For the happiness of man? How does this appear on Mr. Paine's principles? Would not man have been as happy in the world without as with them? Or if he should say, they were made to subserve the hap-

piness of man in the future state; how does this appear? Some reason must be given for this. Here conjectures ought not to be advanced by so zealous an advocate for reason as Mr. Paine. Nor will they be received in this *age of reason.* If these things were not made for the happiness of man, it seems they must have been made in vain, which is contrary to my text; or they must have been made for the misery of man. If this be admitted, what will Mr. Paine, on his principles, say, to vindicate that benignity and goodness of God which he everywhere so highly celebrates?

3. "The true deist's religion consists in contemplating the power, wisdom, and benignity of the Deity in his works, and in endeavoring to imitate him in everything moral, scientifical, and mechanical."

Mr. Paine's true deist doubtless contemplates all the works of God. How then does he contemplate the forementioned works, death, sickness, etc.? Does he contemplate them with complacency? In order to this, he must view them as designed to subserve the purposes of goodness. But how does he know, that they do subserve these purposes? Or does he contemplate them with abhorrence? Then, doubtless, he contemplates the author of them with the same abhorrence. And is this the religion of a true deist? The true deist's religion is said to consist partly, "in endeavoring to imitate the Deity in everything moral." Now the infliction of death, calamity, sickness and misery on mankind, is a part of the moral conduct of the Deity. Therefore, the true deist, to act up to his religion, must imitate the Deity in this, and must kill every man within his reach. And is every true deist a man *of science?* This is something new. This is trumping high. Indeed I had been wont to think, that some deists, as well as some christians, are destitute of science. But to imitate the Deity *in everything scientifical*, requires very great science indeed. From the measure of science, which Mr. Paine has shown himself to possess, I should conclude, that even he is not capable of this. It is a favorite doctrine of his, that "the immensity of space is *filled* with systems of worlds;" i. e. immensity is exhausted, and therefore limited, and infinity is finite. Another doctrine of Mr. Paine is, that "all our knowledge of science is derived from the revolutions of the planets."

But arithmetic is a science; geometry is a science; astronomy, or a distribution of the stars into constellations, is a science; and all these sciences were known to the ancients, though they were ignorant of the true revolutions of the planets. And Mr. Paine must be extremely deficient in science, as well as history, to believe, that addition or subtraction were not, or could not be known

in the world, till the revolutions of the planets were found out. Another demonstration of Mr. Paine's attainments in science he has given in this proposition, that "*trigonometry*, when applied to the construction of figures drawn by a rule and compass, is called *geometry*." If Mr. Paine had imitated the Deity in *everything scientifical*, he would surely have become possessed of more science than he did possess, when he wrote his *Age of Reason*.

4. "It is from *the sciences*, that *all the mechanical arts*, that contribute so much to our earthly felicity and comfort, are derived." And does Mr. Paine believe, that mankind never knew how to make shoes, till they were acquainted with the sciences? and that the Indians derive from the sciences, their skill in making baskets and knot bowls?

5. "A thing which every body is required to believe, requires, that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all, and universal." But is not every body required to believe, that *Thomas Paine* wrote the *Age of Reason*? and is the evidence of this equal to all? "A small number of persons," perhaps not so many as "eight or nine," may have seen him write it. These are introduced as proxies for the whole world, to say, they *saw it*, and all the rest of the world are called upon to believe it. But as "Thomas did not believe the resurrection, and, as they say, would not believe, without having occular and manual demonstration himself; *so neither will I*," believe that Paine wrote the *Age of Reason*. Thus, on the principle here advanced, we are not rationally obligated to believe anything, of which we have not the evidence of sense.

6. "It is impossible for us now to know, that the books," (of the Evangelists) "were written by the persons whose names they bear." Is it possible for us now to know, that the reputed works of *Virgil*, *Tully* and *Horace*, were written by those men? Let Mr. Paine tell us on what evidence he believes this, and I will produce as great or greater evidence, that the gospels were written by the men whose names they bear. Besides, that the gospels were really written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, is not so important, as that the accounts they contain be true. If the facts related in the gospels really took place as related, christianity is true; though the gospels were first published anonymously, and afterward, by mistake, the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, were affixed to them. The gospels certainly were extant at, or very near the time, in which their reputed authors lived; and if the accounts they contain be fictitious, why was not this proved by the virulent enemies of christianity, as, on

this supposition, might most easily have been done? And, in particular, why was it not proved, that the gospels were not written by the men whose names they bear? Here, if it were proper, might be introduced the numerous attestations to many of the most important facts of the gospel, collected from heathen authors, by Grotius, Lardner, etc.

7. "What is this world of twenty-five thousand miles extent, to the mighty ocean of space, and the Almighty power of the Creator?" *Answer.* What is a system of ever so many worlds, to an infinite ocean of space, or to the infinite power of the Creator? Any system of worlds, however large, is still finite; and finite bears no proportion to infinite. Any finite system no more exhausts infinite space, or infinite power, than a single world does. So that the objection which Mr. Paine makes to a small system, still attends his own supposed system, however large.

8. "The word mystery cannot be applied to *moral truth*, any more than obscurity can be applied to light. The God in whom we believe, is a God of moral truth, and not a God of mystery or obscurity. Mystery is the antagonist of truth. It is the fog of human invention, that obscures truth, and represents it in distortion. Truth never envelopes itself in mystery; and the mystery, in which it is at any time enveloped, is the work of its antagonist, and never of itself."

Mr. Paine here tells us, that "the word *mystery* cannot be applied to *moral truth*." What mystery there may be in Mr. Paine's sense of *moral truth*, I cannot say. But that there is a God, existing from eternity to eternity, and the first cause of all things, is a moral truth, in the same sense, that the trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, the hypostatical union, etc. supposing them to be truths, are *moral* truths. And Mr. Paine will not deny, that there is mystery in the divine existence, and especially in his acting as a first cause; for he says expressly, "it is incomprehensibly difficult for man to conceive what a first cause is." Therefore Mr. Paine was strangely forgetful, or he never would have asserted, that the word mystery cannot be applied to *moral truth*, and especially without great forgetfulness he would not have asserted, that "God is not a God of mystery." "Mystery is the fog of human invention." And is the incomprehensible mystery of a first cause, "the fog of human invention?" And does not the truth, that there is a first cause, "envelope itself in mystery?" If not, who envelopes it in mystery? For, by Mr. Paine's concession, it *is* enveloped in mystery. In my text Mr. Paine says, as quoted above, "mystery is the *antagonist* of truth;" and, in the latter part of the text, he says, "the mys-

tery in which truth is at any time enveloped, is the work of its *antagonist.*" Indeed! Is then mystery the work of *itself?* This is strange, wonderfully strange, not only as it implies, that a thing is the cause of itself; but as it furnishes another instance of Mr. Paine's forgetfulness, who, in the same book, abundantly holds, that a thing cannot be the cause of itself.

9. "Mystery—is incompatible with true religion." Yet Mr. Paine asserts, "that everything we behold, is a mystery to us. Our own existence is a mystery; the whole vegetable world is a mystery. We cannot account how it is, that an acorn, when put in the ground, is made to develope itself, and become an oak," etc. At the same time, he holds, that the creation is the word of God, and that from it alone true religion is to be learnt. How can this be, if the creation be so full of mystery, and mystery be inconsistent with true religion? "The very notion and design of religion prove, even to a demonstration, that it must be free from everything of mystery, and unincumbered with everything that is mysterious." How then can it be learnt from the creation, which is acknowledged to be full of mysteries! at least as full as the written word of God. And if religion must be unincumbered with the mysteries of the written word, why must it not also be unincumbered with those of creation?

10. "A miracle, under *any* idea of the word, is a show; and whenever recourse is had to it, it is degrading the Almighty to *a show-man.*" This same Mr. Paine says, "that *every* thing is a miracle, and no one thing is a greater miracle than another." Therefore, whenever the Almighty produces *anything*, he produces a miracle, and a miracle under *any idea* of the word, is a show. Therefore, whenever the Almighty produces *anything*, he degrades himself into the character of *a show-man.* It is in vain for Paine to endeavor to extricate himself from this difficulty, by pretending, that, when he says, "everything is a miracle," he uses the word in a peculiar sense; because he says, under *every* idea of the word *miracle*, it is a show.

WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION OF MORAL OBLIGATION?

This question has agitated the moral philosophers for ages past; and is still not generally decided. The question is, On what account am I primarily bound to practise virtue? But any question is more intelligible and more easily solved, when reduced to a particular case, than when proposed in general terms. There-

fore, as it is an acknowledged duty that we love our fellow men, I will state the question with relation to that duty; thus, What is the primary reason that it is my duty to love my fellow men? Concerning this, there has been a variety of sentiments among divines and philosophers. Some have holden, that the primary reason of my obligation to love my neighbor, is, that by him my own happiness may be promoted; and that all love is reducible to self-love. But this seems to be liable to insuperable difficulties and objections. It destroys the very idea of benevolence, generosity and public spirit. For on that ground no man has, or ought to have more benevolence to another, than a creditor has to his debtor, who wishes his debtor to prosper, that he may recover his dues. But this temper is not considered by our Lord as a true virtue in "sinners, who lend to sinners, that they may receive as much again." And what an insult to any charitable man would it be, to tell him, that in all his benefactions, he had no direct benevolence to his fellow men, but wholly aimed at his own interest!

But some who hold, that all love is reducible to self-love, and that whatever we do, we aim at our own happiness, explain themselves to mean, that in loving my neighbor, I aim at my own happiness in the exercise of that love. If this mean, that in loving my neighbor, I am happy, this, with proper restrictions is true. In the love of complacency I am happy, and benevolence is a pleasant feeling in itself. Yet, as it may be crossed and disappointed, it may be the occasion of pain and misery. But when a man is pleased with the character of another, he does not exercise this complacency for the mere reason, that he expected to be happy in the exercise of it; but has a direct pleasure in that character. The supposition, that a man loves another, merely from the motive, that he expects to be happy in the exercise of that love, implies an equal ability, and equal motives to love any person and any thing. For he who loves a bad character is as really happy in the exercise of his love, as he who loves a good character. Therefore, why has he not the same motive which is the prospect of his own happiness in loving, to love the bad character as the good? If, on the other hand, it be said, that the man has some other motive to love the good character, than he has to love the bad one, it follows, that he does not love the good one from the mere motive of self-love, or of the prospect of being happy in the exercise of love, which is contrary to the supposition.

Some place the foundation of moral obligation in the fitness of things; i. e. it is fit that I should love my fellow men, therefore I am obliged to love them. But the question returns, why is it

fit? So that this solution does not reach the bottom of the matter. Besides, leaving out the idea of a superior being who has a right to control, and authoritatively enjoin certain actions, what is the difference between moral fitness and moral obligation? In this case, fitness, propriety, duty and obligation seem to imply one another, and to be the same thing. Therefore, to say that I am obliged, because it is fit, is to say, that I am obligated, because I am obligated; or it is fit, because it is fit; which is to give no reason at all for the obligation.

Some hold that the foundation of moral obligation is moral sense; i. e. the reason and foundation of my obligation to love my fellow men is, that I have an inward sense or dictate of conscience, pointing out the fitness or duty of that affection; which comes to this, that it is my duty to love my fellow men, because I see it to be my duty. And this is the same absurdity as to say, that the reason and foundation of the existence of a house, is, that I see it to exist. There is a direct contradiction in this hypothesis. My obligation is supposed to exist in order to be seen by my moral sense, and therefore previously to my sight of it; and yet is supposed to arise from my sight, and to be the consequence of it. Besides, this hypothesis makes duty and morality to be very variable, to change according to the age, the country and the manners of men, and to depend wholly on their ideas of right and wrong, instead of being founded on the stable nature of things or actions; and on this hypothesis, torturing captives is a virtue among the aborigines of America; and burning a living wife on the funeral pile of her deceased husband, is a duty among the natives of the East Indies.

Some teach that *truth* is the foundation of moral obligation, and that I am bound to love my fellow men, because otherwise I shall violate truth, this truth, that men are to be loved, or it is my duty to love them. What is this but to say, that the reason why I am obligated to love my fellow men, or why it is my duty to love them, is, that it is my duty to love them? which is mere trifling.

Others say, the will of God is the primary foundation of moral obligation. But the will of God is either benevolent or not. If it be benevolent, and on that account the foundation of moral obligation, it is not the source of obligation merely because *it is the will of God;* but because it is *benevolent*, and is of a tendency to promote happiness; and this places the foundation of obligation in a tendency to happiness, and not primarily in the will of God. But if the will of God, and, that which is the expression of it, the divine law, be allowed to be not benevolent, and yet

are the foundation of obligation, we are obliged to conform to them, whatever they be, however malevolent or opposite to holiness and goodness the requirements be. But this, I presume, none will pretend. If the will, or law of God be the primary foundation or reason of our obligation to virtue, it is the primary rule and standard of virtue, and therefore right in itself, whatever it be, however malicious, envious or tyrannical; which is absurd. On the supposition, that the will, or law of God is the primary foundation, reason and standard of right and virtue, every attempt to prove the moral perfections or attributes of God is absurd; for in every such attempt, the idea which the author of that attempt has of right, is set up as the rule or standard of right; and the divine attributes are compared with it, and proved, or attempted to be proved, to be conformed to it. But if the divine will, or, which is the same, the divine moral attributes, be the primary standard of right, all we have to do is, to inquire what that will is; and whatever it is, whether benevolent or malevolent, it is the standard of right, the pattern of virtue, and the source of obligation.

To suppose that the will and law of God, whatever they be, are the foundation and standard of obligation, of right, and of virtue, is to suppose that all moral obligation is founded on mere *power* and *supremacy*; which few will avow.

I will now propose what I believe to be the true foundation of moral obligation, or of the obligation to virtue. It is the tendency of virtue to happiness—happiness on the large scale, or happiness to the intellectual system, and the happiness of every individual being, whose happiness is not inconsistent with that of the system. Thus I am obligated to my fellow men, because that love tends to their happiness, and to the happiness of the intellectual system. But if love and attachment to an individual, in any case, as to a murderer, whose life and prosperity are inconsistent with general happiness, tend to impair the general happiness, I am not obligated, in that case, to love him. And if, in any instance, my own happiness or gratification be inconsistent with that of the system, I am to give it up as a sacrifice to the system.

CONCERNING THE WARRANT OF THE SINNER TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST.

I have lately read a piece, entitled, "Glad Tidings to perishing sinners: or the genuine gospel a complete warrant to the ungodly to believe in Jesus. By Abraham Booth," of London. Mr.

Booth's object is, to prove that unregenerate sinners have a warrant from the gospel to believe in Christ, and to this end has written a book of 234 pages. The merit and usefulness of Mr. Locke's *Essay on the understanding* is generally acknowledged. But I presume, that it contains not a truer and more useful proposition, than that most disputes arise from the ambiguity of words, and the use of the same words, in a different sense. This is eminently true with regard to the disputes in which Mr. Booth has engaged. He maintains, that the unregenerate have a warrant by the calls, invitations and commands of the gospel, to believe in Christ. If, by believing in Christ he mean, believing all the facts related in the gospel, and all the truths there taught concerning Christ, I presume his opponents will agree with him in asserting, that the unregenerate have a warrant to believe. Nor will they oppose him, if beside an assent of the understanding to the facts and truths before mentioned, he mean by believing, a *cordial* receiving of them, an assent to them with complacency, or, as the scripture expresses it, "receiving the love of the truth." Every man has, on the ground of the divine testimony, a right or warrant, and is indispensably obligated, to believe, all the facts and doctrines exhibited in the gospel. He is also warranted and indispensably obligated, to rejoice in those facts, and to love those doctrines, for the same reason as he is warranted to love the Lord with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself; to delight in the divine law, or to repent and turn from his evil ways.

But if by believing in Christ, Mr. Booth, with many others, mean, a persuasion or confidence of any person, that Christ is *his* Savior; that *his* sins are forgiven for Christ's sake; and that *he* shall, through Christ be saved; Mr. Booth must not expect, that it will be granted, that any unregenerate sinner has a warrant to believe this. Will Mr. Booth pretend, that the sins of any man are forgiven, while he remains unregenerate? Or that while he remains unregenerate, he can have any evidence "from scripture, sense or reason," that he shall be saved? Or that a man ought to believe this without evidence? However undesigned it may have been, Mr. Booth's account of his meaning, is not explicit. He says, p. 3, "By believing in Jesus Christ, I mean relying upon him, as revealed in the doctrine of grace, for pardon, peace and every spiritual blessing." Now, he who believes that his sins are or will be pardoned, and that he shall be saved through Christ, does "rely on him for pardon, peace and every spiritual blessing," as well as he who believes the sufficiency of Christ to procure for him those blessings, wishes to obtain them through him only, and fully and joyfully believes, that if ever he shall ob-

tain them, it will be through him. I grant, that in this last sense, the gospel warrants the unregenerate to rely on Christ for pardon, peace and every spiritual blessing, but not in the former sense.

This ambiguity of the expressions, *believing in Christ*, *relying on Christ*, etc. is all the foundation of this dispute; as it is presumed, that Mr. Booth will not pretend, that the unregenerate have a warrant to believe that *they* shall be saved. And, on the other hand, none of his opponents will deny, that all the unregenerate have a warrant to believe, and love the truth as it is in Jesus.

Another point, much insisted on by Mr. Booth, is, that holiness is not requisite to faith in Christ. This also needs explanation. If it mean, that personal holiness is not previously necessary to give a man a right or warrant to believe and love the truths of the gospel, I grant, that it is no more previously necessary to this, than it is to the love of God, repentance for the remission of sins, etc. But if it mean, that true and saving faith is not an holy act or exercise, this is not granted. It is a *saving grace*, and, therefore, as all grace does, it implies or involves holiness, or is a holy act. True faith in Christ, is a cordial receiving of Christ as the Savior; and this implies complacency in him. But complacency in Christ, is doubtless, a holy act, for the same reason that love to God the Father is. It is called "the most holy faith." This is saying even more than barely that it is a holy act. It "worketh by love." If love to God and divine truth be an act of holiness, doubtless that faith, which worketh, energizeth or exerciseth itself by love, is also holy. "Faith without works is dead." Therefore, a living or saving faith is attended with good works and produces them. And as are the streams, so is the fountain. As the effects of this grace are holy, so is the grace itself. Mr. Booth defines faith to be "a relying upon Christ for pardon, peace and every spiritual blessing." Now this act is either of a moral nature or not. If it be not of a moral nature, unbelief is not of a moral nature, and, therefore, there is no sin in it, and, consequently, there is no foundation for the spirit to convince the world of sin, because they believe not on Christ. If relying on Christ for pardon, etc. be a moral act, it is either a virtuous or vicious act, a holy or a sinful act. And will he say, that an act of sin and alienation from God, "worketh by love," produces good works, and "purifies the heart." (Acts 15: 9.) If not, it seems, he must allow, that faith is a holy act.

OF SELF-LOVE.

In all discourses concerning the nature of virtue or vice, benevolence, public spirit, etc. self-love is often mentioned, and often made the subject of disquisition; yet it appears to me, that no subject is less understood. Most who speak or write on this subject, seem to consider self-love as a particular or single affection, as the love of honor, or the natural affection of parents to their children. This, I conceive, is a mistake. Self-love is loosely said to be the love of our own happiness. But what if a man's happiness consist in benevolence and beneficence, and in comparison with this, he is willing to give up all his other happiness, is this mere self-love? Is it not benevolence itself?

A man's own happiness then, which is the object of self-love, consists in something else than the good of others, or than benevolence and beneficence, i. e. it consists in the indulgence of those appetites and affections which are merely private and personal, centering in him, who is the subject of them, and not aiming at the good of others; such as the several bodily appetites, a love of honor and ease. Therefore self-love is the love of that happiness which is enjoyed in eating and drinking, in honor, personal ease, and in intercourse with the opposite sex.

Loving self as self is a definition of self-love, which, it seems, has become famous. If to love ourselves is to love food, drink, honor, etc. what is it to love these *as self*? Surely not to love them *as food, drink*, etc. The truth is, those objects are, in their own nature, agreeable to every man, who has the common appetites of human nature.

Self-love has been said to be in its own nature sinful; but are an appetite for food, a desire of honor and ease, in their own nature, sinful? It will not be pretended; no more is self-love, if it consist in those appetites, and the exercises of them. Nay, as those appetites are in themselves neither virtuous nor vicious; so neither is self-love, if it consist in them. I am sensible, that such an idea of self-love may be formed, and is entertained by many, as implies that it is invariably sinful. The idea is, that self-love is a preference of ourselves, and of our own happiness, to any other object. This is in every instance sinful. But I conceive that it is not a true account of self-love. It is commonly granted, that even a good man may, and does lawfully love himself, or exercise self-love. But he cannot lawfully love himself in preference to every other object. The appetites before mentioned, are indeed indulged sinfully, whenever the objects of them are

pursued or retained with an inordinate attachment, i. e. in preference to more important good. But when a more important good does not require a man to give up his meal, or submit to shame, he may lawfully indulge his native appetite for food and for honor.

It has been said, that if the lowest degree of self-love be not sinful, neither is the highest; that if you increase a good or an innocent thing ever so much, you do not change the nature of it and make it evil. But I do not acknowledge this reasoning to be conclusive. A moderate fire in a house may be a good and useful thing, but a very large one may be very evil and destructive. A moderate appetite for wine or spirituous liquors may be innocent, but a strong thirst for them may be ruinous. So, a moderate attachment to food, honor and ease, may be innocent. But to be so attached to them, as not to be willing to give them up, when the preservation of our own, or the life of another requires it, is wrong and vicious.

It has been said, that we ought to love ourselves as a part of the system only; and in mere subserviency to the general good. If this mean, that a man ought not to have an immediate and direct relish for his own happiness or pleasure in food, honor, etc. but ought to regard them as he does a dose of ipecacuanha, merely because it is useful to some other purpose than the immediate communication of pleasure; this is manifestly false.

Here an objection will arise; what then does the scripture mean when it requires us, "whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God?" It surely does not mean, that we are to eat or drink without any pleasant relish of what we eat or drink, but that we are not to be so attached to the pleasure of eating or drinking, as not to be ready at any time to give it up, if the glory of God require it.

It seems to follow from what is said above, that the sinfulness of self-love depends not on the nature of it, but entirely on the degree. There is no sin in merely loving food, honor and ease, but when we are so engrossed in love to them, as to forget and neglect more important good, as the glory of God, the good of his kingdom, or any more important interest of ourselves or others, then we commit sin.

What has been said may afford an answer to this question: Does any unregenerate person love himself more than one who is regenerate? I answer, yes; much more; as he is much more attached to his private interest or happiness, in so much that this is his chief good, and he is not willing to give it up for any more important good whatever. But a regenerate person, though he

may have as high a relish for food, drink, honor and ease, as the unregenerate, yet he has an interest, inconceivably more important in itself, and in his esteem, than any, or all these; and, therefore, he is not so attached to these but that he can freely give them up when that more important interest calls for it. Thus he can "deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Christ."

Perhaps it will be objected to a part of what has been said, that if self-love be, in itself, neither virtuous nor vicious, a great part of the exercises of the unregenerate are innocent. To this I answer, they are no more innocent than their exercises about food, honor, and their own ease; and none of these voluntary exercises are innocent, unless they are willing to give up the objects of them, whenever the divine glory or the general good requires it. But this is not true of the unregenerate.

It is said, that if self-love be sin in any case, it is always and in all cases sin; that to say that self-love not regulated is sin, and well regulated is not sin, is as absurd as to say, that sin not regulated is sin, but well regulated is not sin. This is insisted on by a writer in the Theological Magazine, vol. iii. page 283, etc. He says, page 284, "according to this," (the supposition that self-love properly regulated is not sin) "self-love, when by itself, and acting out its own nature, is sinful and sin itself; but when regulated and restrained by some good principle, while the nature of it is not changed, it becomes holy—which is the same with sin's becoming holiness by regulation and restraint, without any change in its nature." Yet this same writer abundantly holds, that every man may, consistently with holiness, regard himself "according to his capacity and importance in the general system." Now, what is this but a well regulated self-love? According to this writer's own principles, therefore, if a man regard himself more than "according to his capacity and importance," it is sin. But if he regard himself just according to his capacity and importance, it is holiness; and "sin becomes holiness by regulation and restraint." If he regard himself more than "according to his capacity and importance," it is benevolence, general benevolence. Therefore, selfishness, by "regulation and restraint," becomes general benevolence.

But perhaps it may be pleaded, that in the aforesaid quotation, the author has saved himself by the clause, "while the nature of it is not changed." The passage is, "self-love, when regulated and restrained by some good principle, *while the nature of it is*

not changed, it becomes holy." To this the answer is, to suppose that the nature of self-love, in the case put, is not changed with regard to sin and holiness, is begging the question, and those whom our author opposes, no more suppose that the nature of it is not changed by the regulation and restraint than he does. If he suppose that the nature of self-love is not changed, by the regulation which he allows and advocates, he falls into the very absurdity which he imputes to those whom he opposes. If he suppose that the nature of it is changed, (as he certainly does, because his idea is, that under the regulation which he allows, it becomes general benevolence;) those whom he opposes have the same right to hold the same change to be effected, by the regulation for which they plead. Indeed, so far as I understand the dispute, the regulation for which they plead, is the very same with that which he allows. Both parties agree, that no man has a right to regard himself or his own interest, any further than according to his capacity and importance; and that every man is, in duty bound, to regard himself according to his capacity and importance, in a consistency with the general good.

Our author informs us, that "all he means by self-love is selfishness or selfish love." I grant, every writer may explain his own meaning; but commonly we ought to use words in their usual sense. Now, the scripture, in that noted text, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," speaks of self-love. It is as if it had said, Thy love to thy neighbor shall be as thy love to thyself, or as thy *self-love*. And our author allows, that the self-love here intended, is not selfishness nor a selfish love. Surely, if the scripture use self-love to mean something different from selfishness, we have a right to do the same. Our author speaks of "a proper regard for our own greatest happiness;" "of benevolence to one's self, according to his capacity and importance;" and of "love having a regard to the person who exercises it." Now, what are these but phrases synonymous with loving ourselves, or self-love? "Regard to our greatest happiness is loving ourselves; so is benevolence to one's self," and "love having a regard to the person who exercises it." However, it is not worth while to dispute about words.

Our author thinks it impossible, to describe a self-love of a "differerent kind from selfishness, which is not included in universal disinterested benevolence." President Edwards did not think this impossible, as he has actually given a description of such self-love. "Self-love," says he, "most commonly signifies a man's regard to his confined private self; or love to himself with respect to his private interest. By private interest I mean that which most im-

mediately consists in those pleasures or pains that are personal." These personal pleasures and pains he proceeds to inform us, to be those of the sensitive appetites, a sense of honor and contempt, external beauty, and all secondary beauty, whether in things external or internal, etc. It will not be pretended, that a regard to those pleasures and pains, so far only as is consistent with the general good, is selfishness, or is general benevolence; general benevolence may influence a man to choose and wish for roast beef and a glass of wine, as he wishes for some bitter and nauseous pill, when necessary for his usefulness to the general good; but it will never influence him to choose and take them with the pleasure and relish, with which they generally are taken. The love which Adam in Paradise had for the fruits of the garden, though perfectly consistent with entire benevolence, was not benevolence itself. The same may be said of all those personal feelings, in which President Edwards places self-love. Here then is a description of self-love, different both from selfishness, and from universal disinterested benevolence.

Surely our author will not deny, that all our natural appetites must be regulated and restrained, and must be indulged so far only as is consistent with the general good; and that when the love of wine is thus indulged, it is innocent; and that Timothy, in "taking a little wine for the stomach's sake, and his often infirmities," might exercise true virtue or holiness; yet that the love of wine, unregulated and unrestrained, is both vile and vicious.

When it is said, that self-love cannot be subordinated to the general good; if by self-love be meant selfishness, I grant it. But there is no impossibility of subordinating to the general good such self-love as President Edwards has described.

The scripture says much of self-denial, and of the duty of it. Doubtless this is a true and important christian grace. But self-denial is nothing but restraining our self-love, and subjecting or subordinating it to the general good.

The gentlemen who deny, that self-love can be so regulated as to be innocent, or can be subordinated to the public good, yet talk of a *man's personal good*, of *his own particular interest*, etc. Now, doubtless, a regard to this *personal good*, and a man's *own particular interest*, is self-love. And as this interest may be subordinated to the general good, so may the regard to it, which is self-love.

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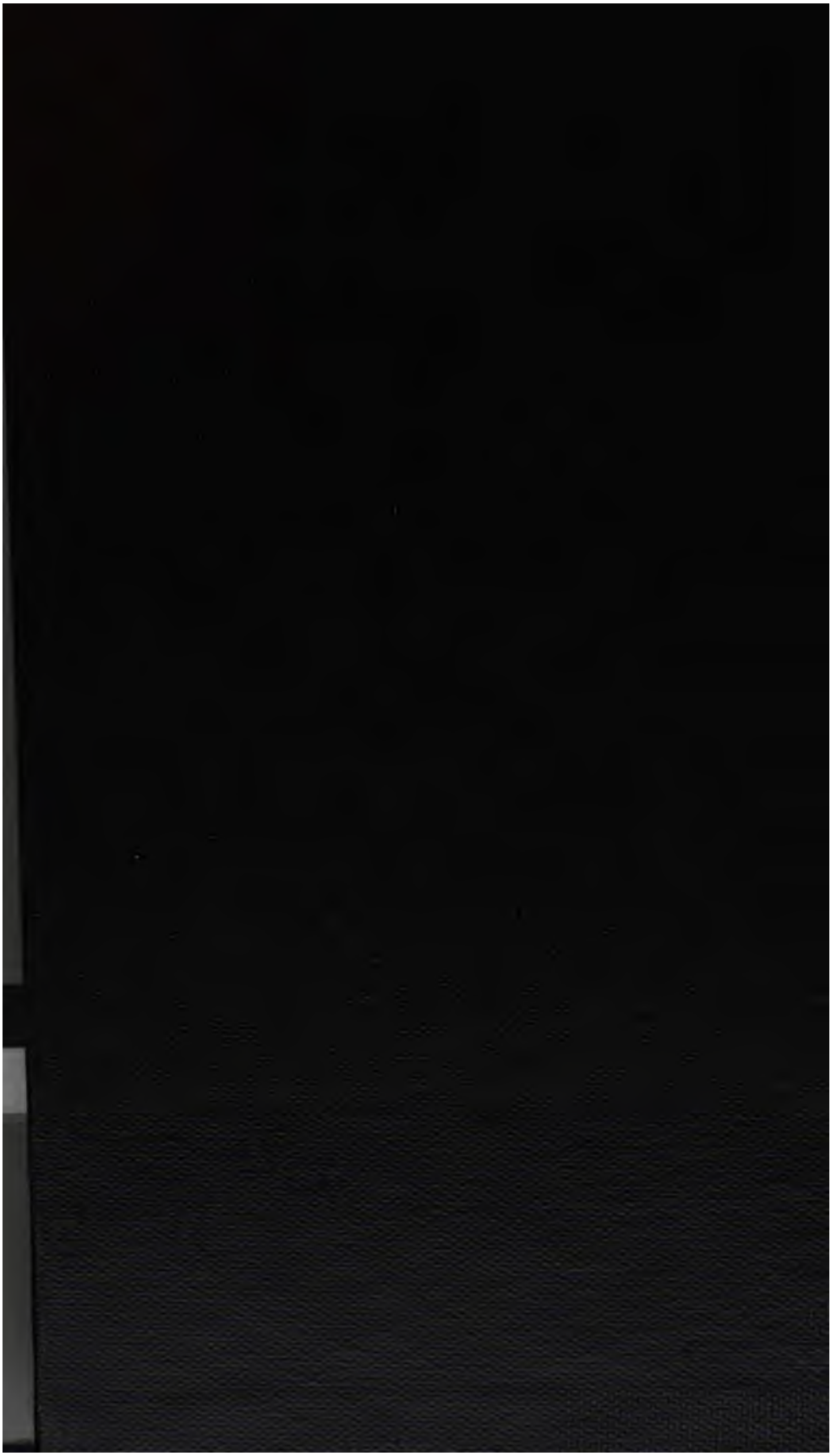
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